Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

VALMIKI
AND HIS TIMES

Prafulla Chandra Bandyopadhyay

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

RR/24/513

227940

(07-02-25)

162/55

21/4/25

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

VALMIKI AND HIS TIMES

Prafulla Chandra Bandyopadhyay

AUTHORS
PUBLISHING HOUSE

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

891.44
B11V

SPS Central Library
Acc. No. 803643

AUTHORS
PUBLISHING HOUSE

D-245, Anand Vihar,
Delhi- 110092

Valmiki and his Times

© Reserved

Edition 2023

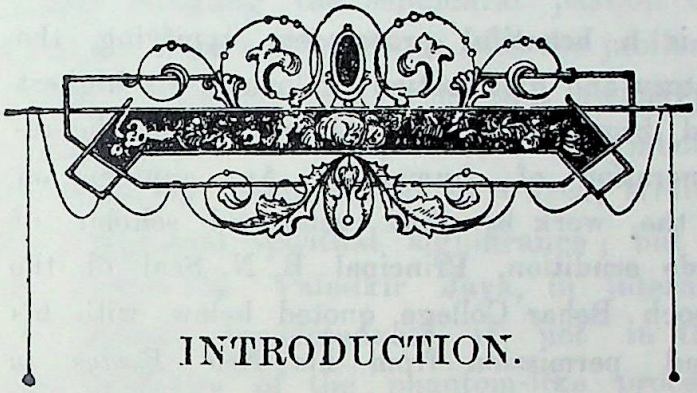
ISBN: 978-27-6031-979-8

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher.

PRINTED IN INDIA

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



INTRODUCTION.

In the columns of the Calcutta Review early in the year 1882, an eminent critic wrote thus about the *Valmikir Jaya*, a unique production in Bengali literature from the pen of Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Hara Prasad Shastri, M. A.: "Mr. Shastri is really grand in his execution. His sentiments are pure and elevated, his scenes are full of the greatest loftiness of the earth and the skies, his style is cast in the high heroic mould, his imagination soars above the greatest heights of the earth and the heavens. His Viswamitra, apparently his most favourite creation, is a grand collosal figure, a wonderful monument of imaginative power."

The theme of the work is the establishment of universal brotherhood among men through the instrumentality of the moral instead of the intellectual and physical forces.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

It is a beautiful prose-poem typifying the victory and glorification of love in its highest and broadest aspect culminating in the regeneration of humanity. An appreciation of the work by that renowned scholar of wide erudition, Principal B. N. Seal of the Cooch Behar College, quoted below with his kind permission from his *New Essays in Criticism*, may be useful in estimating its importance and place in literature :

"The central idea of *Valmikir Jaya*, which is very inadequately expressed by describing it as the eternal triumph of moral over intellectual and physical force, has alike moral profundity and universal applicability. It is not, however, the criticism of life and society, but the mythopœia, the phantasmal succession, that constitutes the essence of this sublime rhapsody. For we must say at once that it is the most glorious phantasmagory in literature known to us. Goethe's Helena with its weird uncertain movement, mingling the antique with the mediæval, the classical with the romantic, displays a fine critical insight; but it pales before the Valmikir Jaya, not only in moral profundity, but also in grandeur of design, a sense of primitive elemental freedom, and an intoxication of the creative imagination. De Quincey's Dream-fugue,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

strangely mingling the sepulchral passion of deliverance from sudden death with the jubilant salvation of Christendom from that apocalyptic dragon, the first Napoleon, and symbolically with the Resurrection of Christ, strains after a profound spiritual significance; but it pales before the Valmikir Jaya, in internal and organic connectedness, if not in the weird sublimity of the phantom-like procession. Richter's Dream of the dead Christ is morally profound, and grotesquely imaginative; but it pales before the Valmikir Jaya in magnitude and breadth of canvas and dramatic intensity of life and passion. The Bengali phantasmagory is sublime not with the sublimity of Ossa and Olympus, but with that of the Himalayan range. Viswamitra, with his creation of a universe and his fall, forms the Everest,—the descent of the celestial Ribhus from beyond the Milky way upon the mountain summits, the Kinchinjanga,—and the vision of the *Virata Murti*, or the Universe-body of Vishnu, the Dhawalagiri,—of this majestic range."

I believed lovers of literature might find the work an engaging and delightful study, and hence it was that I undertook to translate it though fully conscious of the difficulties in my way. How far this

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

admired Bengali work has been rendered interesting in its English garb must be left to the decision of the indulgent readers.

Before I take leave of my readers, I feel much pleasure in acknowledging with gratitude all the valuable assistance and kind encouragement I had the privilege of receiving from my very kind and esteemed friend Mr. A. F. Dowling and another much respected gentleman who prefers to remain unknown. I have also to express my thankfulness to the author for his gracious permission to render his work into English. I shall, however, always deeply regret my inability to place the book in its finished form in the hands of Babu Nobin Chandra Sen — the great poet of Bengal — who took much kindly interest in my work but alas! passed away from among us only a few months ago before it could come out of the Press.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

1. THE HIMALAYAS 1
2. THE RIBHUS 4
3. THE THREE GREAT ONES 7
4. THE SONG OF BROTHERHOOD... ... 10
5. AFTER THE SONG 13
6. THE RIBHUS DEPART 14
7. COGITATIONS 16
8. AFTER-EFFECTS 19

PART II.

1. THE TWO MEET 21
2. THE HERMITAGE 32
3. THE DEFEAT 38

PART III.

1. THE AUSTERITIES 42
2. VISWAMITRA'S VISION 48
3. THE COUNCIL OF THE RISHIS... ... 50

PART IV.

1. IN QUEST OF MATERIALS 56

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

2. THE NEW LIGHT 59
3. THE NEW CREATION 61
4. THE NEW EARTH 62
5. THE NEW MAN 64
6. THE BIRTH OF POESY 68

PART V.

1. THE OLD EARTH 72
2. PEACE ON EARTH 80

PART VI.

1. THE FLYING CITY 87
2. THE END OF THE NEW CREATION .. 91
3. VISWAMITRA FALLS 93

PART VII.

1. THE SACRIFICE 95
2. UNCONSCIOUS MUSINGS 99
3. THE TRIUMPH OF VALMIKI 101

PART VIII.

1. THE CONCEPTION OF THE RAMAYANA ... 108
2. THE ADVENT OF THE LORD ... 113
3. THE SONGS OF THE RAMAYANA ... 116
4. THE ASCENSION 118
5. THE SEVEN RISHIS 120
6. VISWAMITRA 120
7. HEAVEN DECLINED 121
8. THE UNIVERSE-BODY 122

APPENDIX.

I. THE SATYA AND THE TRETA YUGAS ... 125
II. THE VIRATA MURTI 126

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

'Whose high crest is white with everlasting snow' . . . . *Frontispiece*

'Giant forest trees . . . . stood all around overshadowing the hermitage' . . 32

'Assumed the form of a celestial female and rose up to the sky' 39

'Began to practise exceedingly rigourous and severe austerities' 43

'I have, therefore, come to present thee with this Vina' 70

'Sat by the bank of a stream playing upon his Vina' 80

'The nebulæ he had collected together sped away with tremendous force' . . 92

'The perfume of lotus and lilies . . . floating in the tanks regaled the sense of smell' 114

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

THE TRIUMPH OF VALMIKI.

PART FIRST.

THE HIMALAYAS.

AUTUMN has approached and the rains are now over. All is clear overhead,—not the slightest trace of a cloud anywhere. Blue—very blue—blue of the deepest hue all around,—and large stars are blazing bright out from the deep blue tints charming beyond description. Amongst the constellations the Milky Way has parted the firmament in twain and has then split itself up as well. The damp earth has well-nigh dried up, trees and plants flourish luxuriant, and the pleasant tinge of the pervading green proclaims the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

bloom of earth's fresh youth. Deep blue above, deep green below ; — and where the two meet, the same frame seems to hold up two grand works of art with just a slight space between for the lookers-on.

With a cloudless sky and no blurring haze of dust about, — in that happy season, the season of autumn, has any one gazed upon the charming sweetness of the Himalayas ? The whole of Hindusthan spreading out like a vast plain covering hundreds of *yojanas* [a] on one side, and chains of hills after hills, and chains of hills again on the other, — have you set your eyes upon the snow-clad rocks far beyond ? Have you seen how the sun's rays burn bright upon the transparent white ice looking like strings of many-coloured lights illuminating prosperous cities on the advent of their prince ? Crowns after crowns and summits over summits, on the east and on the west, meet your eyes, — no break, no end, seemingly limitless !

The rains have just ended ; the springs around pour forth volumes of swiftly running noisy streamlets crested with milk-white foam, —the many-coloured rainbow glistening here over the sun-lit spray, and there some rivulet

(a) A *Yojana* is 4 *cros* or 8 miles.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

rushing on for ever through impenetrable darkness, invisible in its perpetual course! Wherever the springs appear, trees and plants and rank vegetation bear them company, and where they do not, bleak and frowning rocks threaten to crush all who dare approach. Such astounding heights here and the very deepest of ravines just below! And where is the bottom? Not discernible; and even if human eyes could pierce through the gloom, a tiny streamlet would appear gliding along, its waters frisking and dancing over the rocks and moving on and on. A rugged and sturdy forest tree stands here and there holding its own for a thousand years in its struggle with Time, and a creeping *seonthee*[a] has been twining herself round and round it and so keeping herself alive for the last five centuries.

The Himalayas stand just as you see now: the same through time eternal, the same snow-clad tops as ever, with the springs pouring forth as now and the sky as deep a blue,—the same sublime yet charming beauty in autumn as well, maddening yet awe-inspiring! But in the autumn we have been speaking of,—in the night of the new

(*a*) A flowering creeper.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

moon of that same autumn, —the Himalayas presented a sight so beauteous as had never been witnessed before. It was at the juncture of the two Ages, the *Satya* and the *Treta*.[a]

2

THE RIBHUS.

WHAT becomes of man after death? Who can tell? Some say they change to spirits disembodied; people who have lost their parents aver that they have gone to Heaven. According to the Vedas,[b] however, they do not proceed to Heaven. Those who perform acts of merit here below become *Ribhus*,[c] But where do these Ribhus stay and what is their occupation? Who can say? May be they live in some abode of bliss beyond even the Milky Way.

(*a*) The *Satya* was the first of the four *yugas* or ages, i. e. the best or golden age of general virtue and purity; the *Treta* was the second *yuga* or silver age of the Hindus. See Appendix (I)

(*b*) Sacred works constituting the basis of the first period of Hindu religion.

(*c*) A *Ribhu* is a deity, a divinity in general.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

In the autumn in question, on the night of the new moon, the Milky Way was suddenly cloven in twain, and numberless Ribhus began pouring forth from out of the azure beyond. The universe was lighted up with the resplendence of their bodies. The brightness of the stars faded away and they stood painted, as it were, upon the celestial canvas. In a twinkling the Ribhus crossed the welkin. Birds flitting in flocks, how beautiful do they look ! How much more grand was the sight upon which men on earth gazed with wonder as the shining Ribhus came in numbers spanning the sky and illuming it all round ! Some surmised a comet had risen, others thought the stars were fast dropping down. But the fact was, the Ribhus had come to revisit their terrestrial birthplace !

As they advanced nearer and nearer their happiness knew no bounds. They reached the Himalayas ; and standing there on every mountain crest and peak, they began to sing in strains divine in the exuberance of their delight. How was it possible for beings on earth to grasp its significance ? But their voices alone, so sweet and agreeable to the ear, held the world enraptured. Silence reigned on the earth and in the sky ; the stars stood motionless and the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

cleft Milky Way too remained still and immovable ; the whole world was overwhelmed and deprived of sense, and was plunged, as it were, in the sleep of infatuation. The Ribhus sang in chorus. The harmony filled the vast hollow of space and the universe, and passing out through the opening in the Milky Way died away in the limitless void beyond.

Beings on earth and sky and in all the vast and limitless universe heard the song enthralled and enchanted. A flow of liquid nectar seemed to regale their senses. As in moments of supreme happiness, some lingering continuing pleasure, something dreamy —half-awake, half-unconscious, — something blissful, fascinating, delicious and full of peace, sinks in the heart like the sweet discoursings of distant music, —so did the divine song touch the ears of all who heard it. Scarcely any could make out why he felt cheerful and happy, but all yielded to the charm. Three alone understood the meaning of the song. Fascinated by its strains they were drawn as by a spell to the top of the Himalayas. They are the crests in Bharata's[a] crown, and

(a) India has from the olden times been known by the name of *Bha'rata* or *Bha'ratabarsha* after one of the reigning kings named Bharata.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

their names will live so long as India exists and Hinduism lasts, so long as there is appreciation of greatness in the world!

THE THREE GREAT ONES.

THE first was Vasishta, who sat in his hermitage with sixty thousand disciples around him, imparting instruction to them on spiritual knowledge and on religion and ethics. Some he taught elocution and the proper expressions and the suggested sense of words; to others he explained the mysteries of proof, the object thereof and its application, and also all about doubt, certainty, fallacy, figures of speech and the fallacious semblance of arguments; to a third set he expounded the differentiation between the five subtile rudiments of the five elements and the subtile indestructible body which inheres to the grosser in all its transmigrations; to some others he explained the principles of evolution and the doctrine of the manifestation of the One

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Eternal Essence in various illusory forms. Some he was initiating into the rituals of the great sacrifices such as *Gomedha*,[a] *Aswamedha*,[b] *Rajashuya*,[c] *Agnishtom*,[d] *Goshtom*.[e] and *Jyotishtom*,[f] and some others according to their aptitude into the ten ceremonies prescribed for the three twice-born classes. While thus engaged, his disciples suddenly felt their minds wandering. Transfixed to the spot they lost control over their senses, and became spell-bound and speechless. The strains of the song reached Vasishta's ears too ; his occult power of divination made him conscious of the arrival of the Ribhus. By his supernatural power he at once proceeded along the sky towards the top of the Himalayas. In a moment he arrived there, saluted the Ribhus and began to listen to their song with rapt attention.

The second was Viswamitra. After having led his forces throughout the day in

(a) The offering of a cow.

(b) Horse sacrifice.

(c) A great sacrifice or religious ceremony performed at the coronation of a supreme sovereign.

(d) A protracted ceremony extending over several days in spring.

(e) A sort of liturgy, a ceremony lasting for a day.

(f) A *Soma* ceremony considered as typical of a whole class of ceremonies.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

pursuit of conquest, he had decided to encamp at the foot of the Himalayas in the evening. Fatigued as his legions were, each man began to pitch his tent anywhere he could. Viswamitra sat with a few of his councillors by the side of a tiny rivulet to hold counsel about the movement of the army on the following morning. Just then the sky became illuminated and the strains of the same sweet music struck their ears. The soldiers,—wherever and in whatever posture they were,—lost all sense and became motionless, and forgetful of all else felt entranced with happiness. For him who had pitched his tent there was no making of a bed, while he who was engaged in pitching it left the work half-done; and for him who was about to begin to do so, there was an end of it. Viswamitra understood the song, and with three strides like Trivikrama [a] he rose to the summit of a rock; but he saw and yet he saw not that the lustre of the Ribhu at that spot darkened at his approach.

The third was Valmiki. With his band of marauders he had gone to pillage and

(a) An epithet of Vishnu, who paced the three worlds in three steps in his *Vamana* or dwarf incarnation undertaken to humble the pride of the Daitya Bali who had acquired dominion over the three worlds, viz., heaven, earth and the lower regions.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

plunder the palace of the mountain king. He had ascended the roof of the palace with a few of his followers and was about to dismantle the stairs; noise and confusion reigned: the royal guards knew not where to go to. Here the robbers slashed at the guards, there the latter killed the robbers, and in the confusion the parties often killed their own men. Valmiki was brandishing his sword ceaselessly and issuing his commands through his horn. It was then that there came the flash of light and the sound of music. Every one was then transformed, as it were, into a painted image and stood motionless wherever he was. Valmiki heard and understood. At once he threw away his arms and leaped down, and ascended the nearest hill-top.

4

THE SONG OF BROTHERHOOD.

WHO feels not the charm of music? When even an ordinary human singer pours forth his melodies freely, who is it that does not feel enchanted? Nay more, when the song comes out of the fulness of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the joyous heart, are not its strains sweeter still, filling the mind that grasps the sense with greater raptures! He who understands feels the charm; and should the song touch and fill the heart with emotion besides pleasing the ear with melody, it would simply intoxicate one's senses. It is the Ribhus, however, who sing to-night, with full joyous hearts happy at the sight of their sublunary birthplace. After a long, long time have they come again to set their eyes upon that same ancient, well-watered and fertile motherland whose feet are ever laved by the wave-arms of the four seas and whose high crest is white with everlasting snow. Vasishta, Viswamitra and Valmiki constitute the audience; they hear, they understand and grasp the sense of the song; their ears, their hearts, their very beings are filled to fulness. Their outer senses are all merged in the ear, nay, their minds and hearts as well. They have lost all consciousness and sensibility. They are absorbed in the singers and in their emotion, absorbed in their song and in their strains, and absorbed in the inward meaning of those strains!

The notes as they gathered volume seemed to say, *'My brother,' 'My brother,' 'O My brother!'* The Ribhus with arms out-

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

stretched, seemed to call out to the creatures of the earth and of the air and water, to all that moved and even all that could not move, *'Come, Come, My brother, Come. We all are brothers!'* The strains grew deeper and seemed to call more earnestly, *'Brother, O My brother, we all are brothers.'*

The whole world rang with the sound of *'Brother, O My brother!'* From the wide universe echo answered, *'Brother, O My brother!'* East and South, West and North seemed to repeat in deeper tones, *'Brother, O My brother. We all are brothers!'*

'Brother, O My brother,' was echoed from the bottom of the hearts of Vasishta, Viswamitra and Valmiki, as if a magic touch had benumbed their senses and melted their hearts to the tune of *'Brother, O My brother.'* One a great sage, the second a conqueror, and the third a robber,—the conflicting passions of each seemed to vanish for a moment. Every heart seemed to beat solely to the one tune, *'Brother, O My brother! We all are brothers!'*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

5

AFTER THE SONG.

ALL three had long been beside themselves; but slowly, very slowly, and in silence came a flow of thought stealing into the inner recesses of their minds. Deeply absorbed as they were in the song, even the strongest current of fancy would not have been potent enough to draw them off. For such a slender flow to make itself felt, coursing concealed as it did underneath the very depths of their hearts, was thus entirely out of the question. They continued as enraptured as ever, but their inner nature softened and melted and began to adapt itself to another mould.

Self-complacence pervaded Vasishta's mind,—'I have almost reconciled the conflict between Brahmans[a] and Kshatriyas.[b] I have arranged to make all men brothers.'

Self-conceit was uppermost in Viswamitra,—'I have conquered the whole world with the might of my strong arms and have

(a) Those belonging to the sacerdotal class among the Aryans. They are said to have sprung out of the mouth of Brahma the Creator and special sanctity attached to them.

(b) The martial races of India.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

almost unified humanity. All will be brothers under my sway.'

And what was the thought in the innermost recesses of Valmiki's heart? — Self-condemnation, —'Oh! what have I been doing? It is my brothers only whom I have been ruining !!!'

No one heeded the thought that thus passed through his heart!

6

THE RIBHUS DEPART.

AFTER a while the Ribhus left the summits of the Himalayas and began to ascend higher in space. To Vasishta and others it seemed as if the Zodiac was moving in an unwonted course. As the Ribhus receded higher up, millions of new stars seemed to shine forth; but even this starry vision soon faded away. A large sheet of white cloud appeared to spread over the firmament and finally penetrate the Milky Way which seemed about to ingulf the uni-

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

verse. The sight was similar to what Arjuna had seen towards the end of the *Dwapara Yuga*—the whole universe entering the mouth of Narayana who had assumed the *Virata* form.[a] The masses of white clouds gradually merged themselves in the Milky Way and the great void in its midst was filled up. The world resumed its former shape, the firmament regained its firmness, and the stars blazed forth again in the soft azure above. Morning dawned on earth, and awoke the cries of the crows and the song of the *koil*.[b]

Viswamitra, Vasishta and Valmiki had so long been gazing with wistful eyes towards the Milky Way; all hope forsook them when the Ribhus disappeared. The strains of their music, however, still lingered in their ears, singing, *'Brother, O My brother! We all are brothers.'*

The thought that had hitherto been gliding through their minds unheeded now grew inordinately strong. The various conflicting passions and desires of childhood and youth, new and old, selfish and self-

(a) See Appendix. (II)

(b) The black or Indian Cuckoo, *Cuculus Indicus*, frequently alluded to in Hindu poetry; its musical cry is supposed to inspire pleasing and tender emotions.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

almost unified humanity. All will be brothers under my sway.'

And what was the thought in the innermost recesses of Valmiki's heart? — Self-condemnation, —'Oh! what have I been doing? It is my brothers only whom I have been ruining !!!'

No one heeded the thought that thus passed through his heart!

6

THE RIBHUS DEPART.

AFTER a while the Ribhus left the summits of the Himalayas and began to ascend higher in space. To Vasishta and others it seemed as if the Zodiac was moving in an unwonted course. As the Ribhus receded higher up, millions of new stars seemed to shine forth; but even this starry vision soon faded away. A large sheet of white cloud appeared to spread over the firmament and finally penetrate the Milky Way which seemed about to ingulf the uni-

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

verse. The sight was similar to what Arjuna had seen towards the end of the *Dwapara Yuga*—the whole universe entering the mouth of Narayana who had assumed the *Virata* form.[a] The masses of white clouds gradually merged themselves in the Milky Way and the great void in its midst was filled up. The world resumed its former shape, the firmament regained its firmness, and the stars blazed forth again in the soft azure above. Morning dawned on earth, and awoke the cries of the crows and the song of the *koil*.[b]

Viswamitra, Vasishta and Valmiki had so long been gazing with wistful eyes towards the Milky Way; all hope forsook them when the Ribhus disappeared. The strains of their music, however, still lingered in their ears, singing, *'Brother, O My brother! We all are brothers.'*

The thought that had hitherto been gliding through their minds unheeded now grew inordinately strong. The various conflicting passions and desires of childhood and youth, new and old, selfish and self-

(a) See Appendix. (II)

(b) The black or Indian Cuckoo, *Cuculus Indicus*, frequently alluded to in Hindu poetry; its musical cry is supposed to inspire pleasing and tender emotions.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

denying, rose simultaneously in the mind, and combined with their newly-born thought, incomprehensible and supernal, to raise a great tumult in their souls. For a time they felt powerless to rise and move, and the sound was ever ringing in their ears, '*Brother, O My brother! We all are brothers.*'

7

COGITATIONS.

VASISHTA thinks,—'What a glory is intellect! How cheaply have I taken in the Kshatriyas!' 'I have united the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas,' he continues,—'can I not similarly unite the other races as well?' The same tune again attracts his ears, '*Brother, O My brother!*' Then he reasons,—'all the branches of knowledge I have already mastered! What is manly spirit? The texts certainly have it—"One must work out his own ends." What then is honor or dishonor therein? True it is, the occupation of religious ministration is a work

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

of an humble order; but, is not all power reserved for the Brahmans? I have played my part cleverly! I have again been compiling texts. They also would point to this. *Yoga*[a] philosophy also tends the same way. Honor and dishonor apart, I must gain my ends. Shall I not succeed? Manliness, truth, religion—they all are delusions. Work only is real. Can I not work?—Why did the Ribhus come? What a song! What tender pathos!—Shall I not succeed?—Shall not these eyes of mine look upon them once again? The next time they do, we also shall respond to them with '*Brother, O My brother.*' The means are the intellect and the *Shastras.*[b] I must succeed!' '*Brother, O My brother,*' resounded in his ears.

Viswamitra cogitates,—'And these are the Ribhus! What a song! What shapes! How fortunate am I! And why should I not be so? I shall also have to feel the same raptures some day. I hope for success. I too must respond to them some day. Am I not Viswamitra? Let me conquer the

(*a*) The chief aim of this system of philosophy is to teach the means by which the human soul may attain complete unison with the Supreme Being.

(*b*) Sacred compilations of divine or standard authority and said to be of fourteen or even eighteen kinds.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

world first. None can prevent me. Let me bring all under my grasp and then I shall unite them.' '*Brother, O My brother,*' chimed in his ears. 'If I can some day make the world sing in this strain,' thought he, 'then only shall I be true to my name,—but shall I not succeed? Shall not these arms be potent enough for this work?'

Valmiki lamented,—'Oh! what a number of men I have killed! How many hapless widows have I made! How to wipe off this sin? How can the burning fire in me be put out? Here were the Ribhus. Their song that I have just heard has set my heart ablaze. But I could not join! O, why have I been made human? Where we should all be brothers, every one runs away at my approach! O Lord, why have I been cursed with such a vile life?' '*Brother, O My brother,*' sounded in his ears. Gushing tears flowed down Valmiki's bosom. 'How immense are the sins I have committed!'—thought he, 'Will not this memory ever die away?' Hot tears blinded him and ran out of his eyes afresh!

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

AFTER-EFFECTS.

HOW long the tumult of their hearts lasted who can say? How long the novel electric impulse imparted by the Ribhus caused the distressing storm to rage in their hearts who can surmise? When at last it calmed, and the perception of the outer world returned to their senses, they saw things in another light. The sun had risen in the autumn sky, the stars had hid themselves, the crisp morning air cheered the heart, the rippling of the springs lulled the ears, and the occurrences of the night appeared to them a veritable dream.

After the subsidence of the storm of conflicting feelings, Vasishta felt peace and happiness in his mind. His firm determination and confident hope of bringing about universal brotherhood on earth by the aid of his intellect, learning and power acquired by austerities, filled his heart with pride.

Viswamitra's mind was full of supreme vanity with just a tinge of apprehension. 'I have conquered nearly the whole world. The rest I shall soon subdue, and establish universal brotherhood.'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

No peace, no happiness was for Valmiki. Dire contrition was his all!

He did not return to his band of robbers. Mourning and lamenting, he turned his steps towards silent wildernesses to seek for peace.

As with a light and happy heart Vasishta advanced towards his hermitage for his morning devotions, he perceived the broad-chested and resplendent-bodied Viswamitra coming down, the very ground quaking at his footfall. With the aid of his supernatural powers he at once advanced towards him with all the respect due to him; and the two began to descend the hill together.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

86353/GPS Library

PART SECOND.

THE TWO MEET.

ASISHTA and Viswamitra came down, the hill trembling and sinking beneath their heavy footsteps The rocks and boulders in front scattered far and opened a pathway for them. Stately trees spread out their branching arms to do them honor and cooled them with their shade. Plump, cheerful and sweet-voiced birds with wings of variegated hue pleased their ears with their charming songs. The creepers that entwined the trees rained showers of flower-petals upon them. The wave-arms of the warbling brooks swept their path clean at every step. Delicate forest undergrowth waving in the cool, redolent and soporiferous

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

wind fanned them as if with *chamaras.*[a] Even the steepest and the most unscalable summits they passed over with the greatest ease. Behind them rose the cloud-piercing mountains, and below them lay the vast plains covered with green; and in the middle stood the bright and resplendent Vasishta and Viswamitra, each of them of immense proportions and tall as a hill-top. They looked like two displaced avalanches careering down at an even pace and glistening bright with reflected sunlight.

After exchange of greetings as they met, the god-like Vasishta spoke, and the hill-caves and valleys resounded with his soft, sonorous and deep voice that had been refined by the culture of the art of modulating it in the high, the low and the circumflex tones,—"O King of kings," he said, "I have been hearing since long that your Majesty had been actively engaged in the work of conquering the world. Being very often engrossed with devotional austerities, the chanting of the Vedas and observance of the Vedic rites and ceremonies, I had hardly an opportunity to acquaint myself with the accounts of the wonderful achieve-

(a) *Chowrie*, the bushy tail of the *Bos Grunniens*, used as a fly-flap or fan and as one of the insignia of royalty.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ments of so great a hero as yourself It is an exceptional good fortune to be able to meet you to-day. Would you be so gracious as to gratify my curiosity by reciting to me the amazing history of your conquests ?"

Before the sound of Vasishta's voice, like unto the thunder of rolling clouds, had died away in the dales and caverns, the great king Viswamitra strung his voice to his warrior's tone —deep though somewhat harsh, and distinct and rapid like the twang of the string of a terrific bow, —and said : —"Saint among the Brahmans, it is my great fortune to find so eminent a personage like you interest yourself in enquiring about the actions of a poor creature like myself. Although it is sinful to trumpet one's achievements with his own mouth, I shall try to satisfy your curiosity.

"Four are the means of success against an enemy, —negotiation, bribery, sowing dissension and open attack. Of these the last two are the most approved ; it is by employing these, therefore, that I have engaged myself in this business. I have brought Anga,[a] Vanga,[b]

(*a*) North of Bengal Proper, near Bhagalpur.

(*b*) Bengal Proper, or the eastern part of the modern province.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Kalinga,[a] Dravira,[b] Dra'vira,[c] Kasi,[d] Kanchi,[e] Avantika,[f] Maharashtra,[g] Sourashtra,[h] Gurjarashtra,[i] Matsya,[j] Magadha,[k] Vidarva,[l] and a host of other kingdoms under my sway with the aid of but a single *akhouhini*,[m] and I have set my camp just now at the door of the Himalayas. I have sent some of my most clever and trusted ministers expert in the art of sowing dissensions to create disturbance among the Chins, the Huns, the Shans, the Mans, the Syams, the Mughs, the Nagas and other races in the east. I have also despatched my greatest general with ninety-nine *akhouhinis* of troops towards the west to bring about insurrections

(*a*) A district on the Coromandel coast, extending from Cuttuck to the vicinity of Madras

(*b*) A district on the east coast of the Deccan.

(*c*) Coromandel coast from Madras to Cape Comorin.

(*d*) Benares.

(*e*) One of the seven sacred cities of the Hindus.

(*f*) Modern Oujein.

(*g*) The land of the Maharattas west of India.

(*h*) Surat.

(*i*) Guzerat.

(*j*) One of the north-west districts of India, perhaps Berar.

(*k*) South Behar.

(*l*) The modern Berar Proper.

(*m*) An army consisting of 109,350 foot-soldiers, 65,610 horsemen, 21,870 elephants and 21,870 chariots.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

among the Sakas,[a] the Yavanas,[b] the Pa'rads,[c] the Da'rads,[d] the Arabs,[e] the Pa'ras,[f] the Mlechhas,[g] the Kira'ts,[h] and the other nations. Good tidings have reached me from all quarters. I shall complete my conquests if I can once traverse the earth with my army after conquering the Himalayan regions."

"I am much gratified," said Vasishta, "at hearing the ancedotes of your Majesty's triumphs. You are an astute politician and a skilful general among the most expert warriors. To one like you the conquest of the world is not an impossibility. But I have a doubt which I shall feel highly grateful if you will be pleased to clear up."

(a) A degraded tribe of Kshatriyas.

(b) Barbarians generally, sometimes applied to the Bactrians, the Ionians, the Greeks and more recently to the Arabs.

(c) A barbarous people described by Manu as a Kshatriya tribe degraded to Sudras by neglect of duties.

(d) The inhabitants of the mountain about Kashmir and above Peshwar.

(e) The Arabians.

(f) The Persians.

(g) Non-Aryans, a generic term for persons speaking any language but Sanskrit and not conforming to the usual Hindu institutions.

(h) A degraded mountain tribe become Sudras by their neglect of all religious rites and also regarded as Mlechhas.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

To him Viswamitra: "I should deem it a jest if anybody else were to give such a command to my humble self. But, for a serious nature like thine to indulge in jests is out of the pale of possibility Be pleased, therefore, to command thy servant. He is ready to gratify thy curiosity if it is possible for him to do so."

Vasishta: "My first query is, What is the good of conquests ?"

Viswamitra: "Great Sir, think not there is none: conquest brings the earth under one sovereign, and unity is established among all the nations under his sway."

Vasishta: "I believe, on the contrary, conquest creates bad blood between the victor and the vanquished and banishes all possibility of union. Among the conquered too, envy is engendered by the uneven distribution of the captor's favors. The point of my enquiry is, Does conquest ever generate brotherly feelings among nations? Do they become brothers ?"

Viswamitra: "Nothing but conquest can establish unity and brotherhood on earth; this is my conviction. A conqueror is like the father; he protects his subjects like his children; thus do they all become bro-

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

thers. My belief has been confirmed by the last night's occurrence. The Ribhus had surely come last night to encourage me in establishing unity and brotherhood by means of conquest"

Vasishta: "There you mistake. Ribhus come occasionally to have a look at their birthplace. They came not to encourage you. One word more: by conquest you might subjugate the body; but what control have you over the human mind ?"

Viswamitra: "What stirs within their minds I shall not allow come forth."

Vasishta: "This is repression, not protection, and this does not go by the name of brotherhood. The existence of ill-will precludes all idea of brotherhood."

Viswamitra: "When all get accustomed to subjugation through the use of force, and all are brought down to the same level, it is then that they come to be brothers."

Vasishta: "That is not being brothers. It is like the fumes of a pent-up fire. When this fire bursts out into flames, the conflagration spreads over the whole land, and the conqueror falls a sacrifice to the flames."

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

"Do not fancy," said Viswamitra, extending his right arm, "my subjects will dare revolt as long as this arm wields the bow and arrow."

Vasishta retorted: "If brotherhood is to be maintained only by the use of the bow and arrow, could that be designated brotherhood?"

Viswamitra: "I admit it would not. But can you point out any means of bringing about brotherly feelings besides conquest?"

Vasishta: "Why should I prattle so much if I could not?"

Viswamitra: "Let us then see what you evolve out of your *kamandalu*."[a]

Vasishta: "Well, here it is. The employment of force cannot make men agree. As long as men can think each for himself, nothing can unite any two of them. The very first and chiefest requisite, therefore, is to stop the current of independent thought. Every effort should be made to see that the lower classes have no freedom of thought"

Viswamitra: "Do you mean to say that half a dozen Brahmans can obstruct

(a) An earthen or wooden water-pot used by the ascetic or religious student.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the stream of independent thought among the people of the earth ?"

Vasishta : "What is too hard for the intellect to accomplish ? I shall change the tenor of their mind from their childhood. I shall make them addicted to pleasure and enjoyment. I shall not allow other thoughts to grow in their mind They shall be deprived of the study of books. If one generation does not suffice, then in course of ten I shall bring about brotherhood not only among men but between men and beasts too !"

Viswamitra : "Men to be akin to beasts ? What a marvel of a brotherhood this ! ! ! What is such brotherhood for ? — To preserve the supremacy of the Brahmans intact ? Conquest brings men under the sway of a king only ; but this would make them subject to hundreds of thousands of Brahmans ! Do you believe you will succeed ? Do you not see the heavens yonder, your arch-enemy ? One look at the limitless blue suffices by itself to raise free thoughts in the mind."

Vasishta : "We have arranged for that too. None shall be allowed to cast his eyes towards the limitless sky. A deity will be

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

stationed in every star. The destiny of man I shall cause to correlate to the stars of heaven. Fearful shapes will be made to fill the vast void above. That contemplative mood that gives birth to free thoughts on looking at the sky shall not be suffered to come into their minds. Sea-voyages generate freedom and they must be interdicted. Daily observances will be made so rigid that none shall have the power to move a single step independently of the Brahmans. At the same time a Brahman shall not assume sovereignty."

Viswamitra : "Yes, yes. I follow you. You intend subduing the world by your trickery. But how long can trickery hoodwink men ? I assure you, however, you will never be able to impose upon Viswamitra's followers"

The harsh retorts of Viswamitra were about to kindle the fire of Vasishta's wrath. It was with much effort that he could control his passion ; and he remained speechless till it calmed. Viswamitra thought he had vanquished Vasishta by his acute reasoning and keen sarcasm. His heart swelled with vanity and he could not utter a word for a long while.

After having descended some distance in silence, Viswamitra came in sight of his

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

distant camp. Then having cast a look at the sky above he addressed Vasishta thus. "Great Sir, the day is much advanced. If there be no obstacle, your servant shall deem it a very great favor if you will accept his hospitality in his camp to-day."

Vasishta agreed, and Viswamitra took his guest to his camp with much complaisance and entertained him sumptuously He further made a somewhat ostentatious show of all the vast treasures and jewels he had collected by looting various countries, and made a present of some of them to Vasishta. The latter was very much pleased, and at the time of taking leave of Viswamitra invited him to his own sylvan retreat.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

2

THE HERMITAGE.

AT the hour appointed Viswamitra arrived at the hermitage. Vasishta came forward a long distance to welcome him. On his arrival Viswamitra was struck with wonder at what he saw. Giant forest trees, the *shál*,[a] *tál*,[b] *tamál*,[c] *piásál*,[d] *hintal*,[e] *vaka*,[f] *vakula*,[g] stood all round overshadowing the hermitage; and there was no trace of creepers or shrubs beneath them. So neat was it all round that even a pinch of vermilion dropped to the ground could be picked up again with ease. In the vast wilderness fierce wolves, bears, lions, tigers, leopards, buffaloes, rhinoceroses and other ferocious beasts, and gigantic snakes of the cobra, *keotiá*, *borá*, boa and the like species were all roaming about fearlessly and would not so much as cast a look even upon the cows,

(*a*) A valuable timber tree, the *Shorea Robusta*.

(*b*) The Palmyra or fan-palm, *Borassus Flabelliformis*.

(*c*) A tree with a very dark bark and white blossoms, *Xanthochymus Pictorius*.

(*d*) The *Buchanania Latifolia*.

(*e*) A species of palm. *Phœnix* or *Elate Paludosa*.

(*f*) *Sesbana Grandiflora*.

(*g*) *Mimusops Elengi*.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

'Giant forest trees . . . stood all around overshadowing the hermitage'

p. 32

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

lambs, goats, and other animals, their natural prey; but as Viswamitra and Vasishta entered, they ranged themselves on either side of the road and bent to them in obeisance.

Viswamitra remarked, "O Thou of great heart, true it is your intellect has subdued the wild animals, but you will never succeed in bringing men under its sway."

Vasishta replied: "It is the influence of the locality that has tamed them, not my intellect."

The scene, however, changed very soon. The wilderness was transformed into a garden. The extensive grounds of the hermitage lined with beds of various autumn flowers looked like a piece of neatly laid carpet. Somewhere it was white of various gradations, somewhere blue and elsewhere red, and then green and again yellow, all undulating in various shades—one colour fading and another brightening up. And where the floral tints failed to furnish sufficient variety, stones of various hues made up the want. This carpet was strewn over on all sides with sweet-scented flowers of numerous species which saturated the air with their

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

perfume. In the middle of this wide chequered ground stood a large reservoir, all of marble, with marble stairs running into the depths below; even the lowermost stone at the bottom was visible, so clear and crystalline was the water. A bridge, also of white marble, ran across it, and over its side-rails of emerald stood wondrous jewelled stands with *sukas*,[a] *sárikás*,[b] *hariyá's*, *myná's*, cockatoos and other birds of sweet voice perching upon them. They warbled and peacocks and peahens with wings and tails of variegated colours danced and welcomed the great king. Fishes of red, blue, yellow and golden hue swam about in the transparent water. A similar carpet lay stretched a little way off from the tank. Not far from this stood a large palace. The doorway was of touchstone, with inscriptions in gold to the effect :—

"Welcome, Viswamitra, the glory of the race of Gá'dhi !"

On entering the palace, Viswamitra found at once that he had never before cast eyes upon such magnificence in all the realms he had conquered. Pearls, diamonds and

(*a*) Parrots.

(*b*) Commonly called *Maina*, either the *Gracula Religiosa* or the *Turdus Salika*.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

other precious gems formed the constituents of the decorations in the house. The whole of the edifice was built of the very best stones of immense value. The history of Parasurama's victories was painted upon the walls :—here was Parasurama[a] propitiating the manes of his ancestors by offering libations out of a lake formed by the blood of Kshatriyas, there was a battle raging and the Kshatriyas were being extirpated ;—thus were the accounts of a score and one encounters depicted on the same number of walls.

Víswamitra contemplated the whole dumb-founded. It seemed to him as though Vasishta was thus repaying his hospitality in kind as well as giving answers in respect to the parley they had together. Ill feelings began to grow in his mind apace till they ripened into envy. But he concealed the tumult in his breast for the time and partook of Vasishta's hospitality, ate and drank merrily and enjoyed the singing and the dances. At his departure Vasishta brought him suitable presents.

(a) The sixth avatar or descent of the deity Víshnu who appeared in the world for the purpose of repressing the tyranny and punishing the violence of the Kshatriyas or military caste ; he seems to typify the tribe of Brahmans and their contest with the Kahatriyas.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Thereupon Viswamitra asked: "Great Sir, You are an ascetic and you live in the wilderness. Where could your untold riches come from?"

Vasishta replied: "Great King, I have a cow, *Nandini*[a] by name, the offspring of *Kamadhenu*.[b] She furnishes me with all I desire to have."

Viswamitra spoke out: "Small presents will not then gratify me; that cow must be given to me"

Vasishta replied: "When I brought her away from her mother I promised never to give her to anybody."

Viswamitra said: "Your refusal would be a slight to your guest, you will remember; you are the enactors of all social canons."

Vasishta said: "To make one by force or by trickery to break his word is a great crime. So I beseech thee to desist from such an impious resolve."

Viswamitra could conceal his purpose no longer, but said, "You will not give her to me? Well, I shall then rob you of her. I believe robbery is not a greater

(a) A fabulous cow; literally, a daughter.
(b) The cow of plenty yielding all desires.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

crime than making one break his word." Saying this he ordered his followers to carry off the cow.

On the one hand a guest is the impersonation of all the gods, on the other there was robbery by force;—Vasishta was sorely perplexed and could make no reply. The men prepared to carry off the cow and she cast mournful glances and kept looking towards Vasishta very piteously! The latter burst into tears and said: "What am I to do, my poor thing; a guest, a king, a mighty conqueror is robbing me of you as you may yourself well testify."

No sooner was this uttered than Nandini burst into a deafening roar which rent the sky and the regions below earth, and numberless Pa'rads, Pa'ras, Chins, Sha'ns, Ma'ns and warriors of other races all in warlike accoutrements at once appeared on the scene to save her. As soon as he saw them Viswamitra reflected that Vasishta's intellectual power had brought under control the Pa'rads and other races whom even his best generals had not yet been able to subdue by force. He now came to perceive that intellect can subjugate human beings as well.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

3

THE DEFEAT.

FIERCE strife raged on account of the cow between the Kshatriya soldiers arrayed on one side and the Yavana warriors on the other; Nandini stood in their midst. She attempted repeatedly to get away, but the Kshatriyas prevented her. The Yavanas attempted to liberate the cow and the fight began—the fight between the Kshatriyas and the Yavanas on behalf of a Brahman who stood a mere spectator. Long swords waved, tall lances swung, the strings of long and heavy bows twanged, and the din seemed like the roaring of clouds in the heavens. Viswamitra led his own army; there was no leader on the Brahman side. Vasishta was unwilling to fight with a guest and dissuaded his sons and disciples also from fighting, saying, "My children, my disciples, whatever be the tenets of the Kshatriyas, the strength of the Brahman lies in forgiveness."

The Brahmans did not fight, but the battle raged on. Presently blood began to flow, till streams of it began to run and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

'Assumed the form of a celestial female and rose up to the sky.'

p. 39

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the dust of the battle-field was turned into mud. Viswamitra's troops began gradually to fall,—they were killed by hundreds, his men on foot and on horseback and warriors on chariots and elephants. With a formidable sword in hand he then plunged himself into the raging sea of strife. Every stroke of his blade severed the heads of hundreds of Yavanas. But he soon realised that his efforts were in vain, for each time that Nandini bellowed a fresh *akhouhini* of troops arrived. His own veteran myriads were swept away by the ceaselessly advancing waves of their legions. Viswamitra then commanded, "Kill the cow."

But she had not yet fallen into the hands of the Kshatriyas; and as soon as they prepared to make an attempt upon her life by throwing lances and *nárácha*[a] at her, she assumed the form of a celestial female and rose up to the sky. There, seated on a white lotus, clad in white raiment, the lustre of her white complexion causing the brightness of the full moon to pale before its effulgence, with a white *Vindh*[b] in hand and decked all over with

(*a*) Arrows of iron.
(*b*) The Indian lute.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ornaments of white lotus, She lighted up the world with her marvellous beauty! Said She: "Thou fool! I am the genius of the Brahamans. What power hast thou to carry me off? For races and generations have I lived and been living with the Brahmans and ever shall." Viswamitra was struck with astonishment. He saw *Saraswati*[a] then resume the shape of the cow and descend near to Vasishta, and the whole army melted away into the air. Tears of happiness streamed out of Vasishta's eyes, and he began caressing and stroking the body of the cow with his hands.

This was the first defeat that Viswamitra suffered. Borne down by humiliation and sorrow and envy, he could no longer raise his eyes towards the cow or towards Vasishta. He threw down his bow and arrow in anger; he told his soldiers to return to their homes, and threw upon his minister the burden of his kingdom. He exclaimed:

"Shame to the might—the might of the Kshatriyas! The real might is the *spiritual power* of the Brahmans!"

(a) The goddess of speech and learning.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

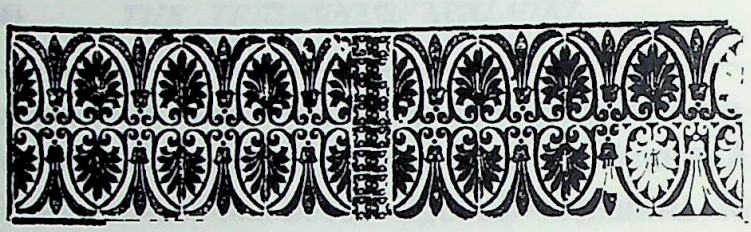
Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Saying this he entered the Himalayan forests bent upon gaining the spiritual power of Brahman through devotional austerities.

Thus was Viswamitra made to perceive the futility of any attempt to unite the whole world by force of arms.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



PART THIRD.

THE AUSTERITIES

NOBODY could know where Viswamitra had gone to. He did not return home with the soldiers. His minister reigned for him. The members of his family awaited his return daily for days and months and years. Vasishta tried again to unite the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas in accordance with his own design. But his attempts failed, for the partisans of Viswamitra grew extremely hostile towards him.

Viswamitra had in the meantime been absorbed in deep contemplation and austere self-mortification. He would be a Brahman, he would unite the Brahman and the Kshatriya forces by the strength of his own arms

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

and become the undisputed lord of the earth with its many oceans, he would unite all under the sway of a single ruler,—this was the object he had in view. He entered a very wild and impenetrable spot in the Himalayas and at once began to practise exceedingly rigourous and severe austerities. On the first day he took but a single mouthful of food and on the day following only half. After that he took a grain and then only half a grain; then followed a drop of water, after which he stopped food altogether and immersed himself wholly in devotional meditations. His body wasted away; and though he remained exposed to the inclemencies of winter, summer, spring and the rains alike, he was insensible to them all, so deeply was he plunged in contemplation. His eyes sank in their sockets, the nasal bone was the only thing that was clearly visible, and his bones were covered merely with skin. His hair grew very long and lay in a heap on the ground. The nails on his toes penetrated into the earth like the roots of trees. White ants formed their nests on his body. There was no end to his meditations. Tigers, bears and other beasts of prey if they saw him would quietly walk away from a distance.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

In this terrible state, Viswamitra became subject to hallucinations of various kinds. Sometimes it seemed the whole world had been converted into atoms; he alone stood in the midst, and his body soon grew and filled the universe. Its glowing refulgence scorched the atoms and then his body itself began to burn out. A sensation of great internal heat interrupted his meditations and woke him. He saw some young and exquisitely beautiful damsels, fairer than the *Apsaras*,[a] dancing before him and some moving round and round. Some of them waved their full tempting bodies steeped with desire, some stood half-nude with arms upon their waists. Some of them ogled their eyes full of passion now tender, now fickle, exposing plain their heart's desire at every turn. Their eye-lids quivered, and rapid glances they shot like arrows, now languid, then swift as lightning. Some wore their hairs in braids, others loose; some had curls and the tresses of others waved in the wind. In various ways did they all show off their coquettish tricks, and it was towards Viswamitra alone that their languid lustful desire

(*a*) Certain female divinities who reside in the sky; they have the faculty of changing their shapes and are said to have been produced at the churning of the ocean.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

was manifested. He saw ; and when the burning within him cooled a little, he again plunged into meditation.

He began to dream afresh. Millions of suns had arisen ; their brightness dazzled the eyes and scorched the body. Viswamitra fled and tried to proceed to some distance from them. He fled far, far, very far away from them until their rays grew mild. But in the place he reached, hundreds and thousands of serpents bit him fiercely The scorching poison awoke him from his meditations.

Awful sights now met his eyes. Beasts of dreadful shapes terrified him. Some had mouths like those of boars with manes of lions and tails extending over miles Some were frightful goblins with eyes over their heads and half their bodies full of arms, with two legs and two hands groping about in search of eatables and eagerly devouring whatever came handy. Some had tusks like a boar's, others like an elephant's, some had heads like crests of hills ; other had heads, but hardly, it seemed, any legs at all. The black breasts of some of the female sprites hung huge like hill-tops. Some were black, some blue, others yellow, and they looked terrible in varied colours.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Viswamitra's heart of hearts dried up in himself as this hideous army attacked him at the bidding of their leader. But no sooner had he flashed his glances at them than were the army of evil spirits destroyed and demolished. Some broke their legs, some died, others received wounds in their heads. The dangling breasts of those who bore them broke off and lightened their bodies. The head of one joined the trunk of another, and the legs of some stuck to the heads of others.

Finding the evil spirits thus destroyed, their captain came forward with a smiling face to insinuate himself into Viswamitra's favor, and addressed him thus: "O Viswamitra, thou art exceedingly mighty, — thou hast conquered all by the strength of thy arms. With the aid of the powers begotten of thy austerities, thy look alone has played havoc among my array of evil spirits. Be, therefore, my son. In this vast universe that is visible, all the *Asuras*,[a] *Daityas*,[b] *Dánavas*,[c]

(a) Evil spirits of the first order in perpetual hostility with the gods.

(b) Demons who are the sons of Diti and are implacable enemies of gods

(c) A class of demons, the Titans of the Hindu mythology.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

and sprites and goblins are my subjects; thyself alone wilt be my sole heir. I shall instal thee as king without delay and devote myself to the enjoyment of pleasures of the senses. So be my son. Rise to the top of the Himalayas, and rich and prosperous lands without number will meet thy gaze all around,—the whole will be thine. China, Japan, Egypt, Persia—all shall bow to thee. Those handsome women who came to tempt thee are mine. They shall all be thine. All the gems and pearls and gold mines that meet thy eyes are my own. There is no limit to the number of those who owe allegiance to me. Be thou my son and the sole sovereign of all this peerless kingdom. No fear, no apprehension need be thine. So long as thou canst not settle thyself, I shall stand by thee and provide for the preservation and solidarity of thy empire."

Viswamitra asked: "Can you give me the Brahmanical rank? Can you give me Nandini? Can you offer me learning? Can you give me Saraswati?"

"No, I cannot," was the reply, "but I can give you power to contend with the Brahmans. I can kill Nandini, I can uproot all learning. But I am powerless to do anything against Saraswati."

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

"Then you would not serve my purpose," said Viswamitra, and again plunged in meditations.

2

VISWAMITRA'S VISION.

BUT now he could no longer close his eyes: for, from having to stop his breath continually and to bend his thought upon the self-same matter and from continued inanition his eyes refused to close any more. But through unremitting introspection he lost all sensibility to the outer world. A grinding sound like that of mill-stones issued forth through his ear-holes, and sparks of fire scintillated through his nostrils. When this sound issued forth, the circle of the Zodiac began to travel from the right to the left around his head. The Milky Way turned round. His skull was suddenly shot upward through the intense heat of the fire within. A booming sound filled the universe. It rolled in the heavens and circled round and round; and at last it rent the firma-

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ment that crowned the universe and passed away through the cleft.

From beyond it was heard like the ceaseless roar of a hundred thousand thunder-clouds in the distance the following exhortation :

> *"Om[a] ! Earth, Atmosphere, Heaven ! Upon the adorable effulgence of that divine Savitri[b] do we meditate, from whom our intellect doth emanate !"*

The sound penetrated Viswamitra's ears, and his uplifted skull returned to its place. His body gained strength in a moment and became bright and plump. "I may not attain Brahmanism," thought he; "the vision of the *Veda Mantra*[c] was the exclusive right of the Brahmans. I have broken that at least. This is enough !" So saying he plunged into meditations again.

(*a*) A sacred exclamation made by a Brahman previously to any prayer and sometimes translated by 'verily,' 'so be it.' It is a monosyllable of mystic significance and in later times represents the Hindu triad, Vishnu, Brahma and Siva.

(*b*) Generator, vivifier ; the Sun.

(*c*) The texts of the *Vedas*, the sacred Hindu Scriptures. A *Mantra* is a prayer or hymn of adoration addressed to a deity.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

3

THE COUNCIL OF THE RISHIS.

NO one could now remain ignorant of the violent commotion that disturbed the universe owing to Viswamitra's devotions. Brahma[a] invited all the great Brahmarshis to meet in a council with the object of making Viswamitra a Brahman. Thereupon, Kanwa, Vasishta and other Brahmarshis and Na'rada and other Devarshis,[b] all arrived. The council met in the firmament, and it looked as if hundreds of suns

(a) The Creator in the Hindu Trinity, the other two being Vishnu the Preserver and Siva the Destroyer.

(b) There are three orders of *Rishis* or inspired sages: *Devarshis* or saints of the celestial or divine class, *Brahmarshis* or Brahmanical sages, and *Rajarshis* or saints of the royal or military class who obtain the rank and sanctity by the performance of great austerities. *Rishi* is an inspired poet or sage, one who invokes the deities in rythmical speech or song of a sacred character. The *Rishis* are the authors or rather the seers of the Vedic hymns, *i. e.* according to orthodox Hindu ideas they are the inspired personages to whom these hymns were revealed. In later times, *Rishi* signifies a saint or sanctified sage in general, or an ascetic, who attains sanctity and purity by contemplation and practice of austerities and renunciation of worldly affairs.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

had risen in the sky. A Sudra[a] king was there consecrated as a Brahman. The great *mantra* revealed to Viswamitra went by the name ef the *Gáyatri*[b] and was henceforth accepted as the most adorable object of invocation to every Brahman. But when Brahma proposed to raise Viswamitra to the status of a Brahman, none of the Brahmanical sages or the divine Saints signified assent. Some remarked that Viswamitra had nearly made himself master of the world already; and if he were to secure this position and the learning of the Brahmans, he would be sure to make an end of the creation forthwith. Others said, 'his ambition is inordinate; if he obtains the dignity of a Brahman to-day, he will seek to be Brahma to-morrow. It is, therefore, very imprudent to encourage him.' At length the assembled Rishis resolved to send Brahma to him as their representative enjoining him to grant Viswamitra anything he wanted, Brahmanism

(*a*) The servile tribe whose business according to Manu was to serve the three higher castes; the *Sudra* is fabled to have sprung from the feet of Brahma.

(*b*) The verse is very sacred and is repeated by every Brahman at his morning and evening devotions. From being addressed to the *Savita* or the sun as generator, it is also called *Savitri* The *Gayatri* verse is also personified as a goddess, the mother of the four Vedas.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

only excepted. The great god Brahma then ascended the chariot of solar rays, and scattering brightness far surpassing that of the sun arrived at the lonely cavern of the Himalayas. He awoke Viswamitra from his meditations and said, "I am Brahma. I have been satisfied with thy devotions and have come to grant thee thy desired boon. I shall bestow upon thee what thou cravest for unless it were a boon that it is not possible to grant."

"I want the Brahmanical rank. Can you give it to me ?"

"No."

"Then I seek no boon from such a Brahma as thou."

Brahma was somewhat crest-fallen, and ascending his chariot of sun-beams he returned to the council of the Brahmarshis, and advised them to make Viswamitra a Brahman. None agreed: but they consulted together and resolved to go to Viswamitra and persuade him to be satisfied with some other boon. Vasishta was at first unwilling to accompany them, but he was afterwards prevailed upon to do so at the earnest request of Brahma and others of the council. The bright-bodied Rishis then arrived near

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Viswamitra, —some coursing on the solar rays, some riding the air, some impelled by supernatural power, and some others pacing quick as thought. Brahma again interrupted the meditations of Viswamitra who was filled with indignation on seeing Vasishta among his benevolently disposed visitors and remained speechless a long while. The wise ones began to expostulate with him: "Brahmanism is a paltry matter. Great and able as you are and an austere ascetic, you are the very crown of the Brahmans. Since it is ordained that all Brahmans must utter and repeat your *mantra*, what else is there left for your attainment of the rank of a Brahman? This status is fraught with too many hardships: various are the vows and regulations that have to be observed. King as you are, it would be very distressing for you."

Viswamitra: "If I could undergo such stern and rigid austerities as I have done, shall I be powerless to carry out the vows and observances of the Brahmans?"

"Do we say you should? But what is the use of your undertaking such hardships? Why not attempt to attain the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

position of Indra[a]? That rank would suit you best. We are all satisfied with your devotions and give you the title of *Rájarshi* or Royal Rishi. You are well aware the kingly Rishis are just below the Divine saints and the Brahmarshis in rank, and we make you a Rishi of this third order. What need have you to be a Brahman? Here is the honored insignia of the *Rájarshis*. Accept it."

Viswamitra saw through the craftiness of all this speech. He could at once perceive that the Brahmarshis had been frightened by his austere observances. He flung away the insignia from him, and said, "Brahmarshis, I have seen through your trickeries. I perceive how with your specious words you keep me out of the Brahmanic rank. But I seek this no more. I desire to be a Brahma. I shall not flatter you and pray to you any further. I shall create a new world and become its Brahma. I shall cast off sorrow from my world. The Brahmans shall keep their distance from it. See if you can prevent me."

(*a*) The god who in Vedic mythology reigns over the deities of the intermediate region or atmosphere; he fights against and conquers with his thunderbolts the demons of darkness, and is in general a symbol of generous heroism. He is subordinated to the triad Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, but remains the chief of all other deities.

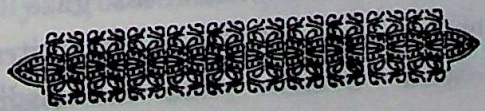
CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Vasishta beckoned to Brahma and said: "Did I not say this before? He is already so puffed up though not even a Brahman as yet!" The Rishis began to make fresh attempts to persuade Viswamitra: "It will be no wonder if you should create a world if only you are so inclined. For him who could cleave the universe asunder with his austere observances, to create a world is no way astonishing. We are your friends and it is good advice we offer you: Why should you undergo such troubles? You are second to none in this world. You are above the Brahmans and Brahma as well. Why should you then desire to undergo the labour of creating a world?"

Viswamitra: "Uproot the race of the Brahmans from the face of the earth! I may then stay in your creation. Brahmans my eyes cannot bear to look upon."

Thereupon Brahma and all the rest retired hastily quivering with anger: while Viswamitra ascended the highest summit of the Dhwalagiri to survey the universe with the object of creating his new world.



CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

PART FOURTH.

IN QUEST OF MATERIALS.

AMONGST the countless clusters of stars crowding the clear autumn sky as you look at it are occasionally perceived certain objects appearing like dim white mist. Look through an optic glass, and they will appear more distinct. They are in fact nothing but materials collected for the work of creation, out of which neither an earth nor a solar system has yet been formed. Some designate them nebulœ on account of their faint misty appearance.

These nebulœ struck his gaze for the first time on the day that Viswamitra quarrelled with Brahma and the Rishis and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ascended the high summit of the Dhwalagiri. He at once bent his course towards them through space. Like an arrow, like a steam-car, like ligtning the kingly Rishi Viswamitra sped through space and left hundreds of thousands of miles behind every moment. His complexion was of burning gold, and his thickly matted amber tresses hung behind him reaching down to the heels and glistening in the sunlight. Seeing this unusual phenomenon in the day-time, men on earth took it to be a shooting star. As the night darkened and Vasishta was getting ready to engage in his devotions in loneliness in his hermitage, he saw a comet rise all on a sudden in the sky, and his heart trembled with apprehensions of some approaching danger. The heart that was unperturbed in the greatest of battles and was unruffled in the council of the Brahmarshis, felt suddenly chilled with fear.

Viswamitra rose above the lower atmosphere, left the regions of still air and passed through the ethereal space of the Causal Element. He next went through the spheres of Mars aud Jupiter; and then gradually crossed the paths of all the other planets and entered the regions of another Solar System. Passing again its planets and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

satellites he arrived at the system of a third sun. Thus he passed from one solar system to another, and thence through unnumbered succeeding ones, till at last he reached the infinite Void, incomprehensible by reason and inconceivable by the mind, where there was no air nor sound, —all silent and inane! It had no end nor beginning, it was dense and sombre; it was boundless and bottomless, and was like an impassable, awful, shoreless and shapeless ocean. Stars and planets had receded further and further till they were visible no more. Light also grew fainter. It was his supernatural power alone that was impelling him on, not his human strength. In this dreadful space which was beyond the reach even of imagination no sense of fear ever touched him. Having gone a long distance into this bottomless infinity, he saw by the feeble light that there were ceaselessly revolving in a whirl, boundless, fathomless, innumerable, endless clusters of atoms in eternal motion, all round some invisible centre. As this seemed to be the nebula towards which he had wended his way, he stayed his course at no great distance from it.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

2

THE NEW LIGHT.

BY profound meditation Viswamitra came to be aware of the existence of myriads and myriads of nebulœ in this bottomless and illimitable void. He then began to attract them by his supernatural psychic power. What countless stars and planets were drawn together into that shapeless mass of unformed matter, who can say? Viswamitra looked on through the dim light. It seemed as if aquatic animals of prodigious bulk, fearful at the violent agitation of the element, were swiftly making for a safe haven of refuge at the transparent glassy bottom. Or, immense fragments of huge clouds driven by contrary winds seemed to be conglomerating together.

When masses of that nebulous matter sufficient for his purpose had come in, by his supernatural power he caused them all to draw together and produced rotatory motion in them. Each nebula began to revolve round its own centre and all rotated together in a vortex. The rapidity of the movement kept on increasing every moment,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

till it attained the speed of thousands, millions, billions, and hundreds of thousands of billions of miles in a moment. The more swiftly they whirled the closer the atoms drew and the more and more dense they grew. With the increase of density developed heat, till all the larger pieces began to glow. Stars that were thousands of billions of miles off disappeared altogether. Piercing the thick gloom, banishing darkness from the new world and lighting up the bottomless caverns of endless space hid in eternal black, the vast radiating beams of the new light reached the farthest quarters of limitless space with its new intensity and travelled through twelve *crores*[a] of miles in every second to convey the tidings of the New Creation to Vasishta. Viswamitra looked and saw the light was good, and the Sun of his new Solar System was well-formed and its fire was never to quench in millions and millions of ages to come.

(*a*) A *crore* is ten millions.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

3

THE NEW CREATION.

AFTER it had burned for a while, Viswamitra said "Let there be *Budha,*[a] " and a fragment of the glowing revolving mass detached itself, flew to some distance and began to rotate round it. By degrees it cooled and shaped itself into the planet Budha. Viswamitra saw his Budha was good. He then commanded, "Let there be *Sukra,*[b] " and another portion of the bright rotary mass flew to some distance and began moving round it. Viswamitra saw Sukra was well-made. Again he said, "Let there be Earth," and another part from the burning matter moved away and was converted into Earth with its hills and mountains, rivers and streams, and isles and seas. Viswamitra saw that the old Earth was no way to be compared with his own creation. Thus out of that vast atomic matter in course of three days, he created the sun and the moon, *Mangal,*[c] *Vrihaspati*[d] and other planets, and

(*a*) Mercury.
(*b*) Venus.
(*c*) Mars.
(*d*) Jupiter.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

meteors and comets as well, and in fact all that is in our old Solar world. But his Earth and his Sun were millions of times larger than our own. From our earth Viswamitra's creation appeared to be of immense magnitude.

4

THE NEW EARTH.

ON this new Earth water, air, snow, grass, trees, forests, hills and streams were all just as they are in the old earth. The only addition was cocoanut trees which did not then grow on our earth. There were no beasts of prey in his creation. Beautiful birds with plumage of variegated hues pleased the eye and the mind and were very numerous; and it was a delight to look upon the varieties of charming animals there. All the flower-plants bore sweet-smelling flowers—their very leaves and even the stems were sweet and fragrant. The grass mantling the surface of the new earth smelled sweeter far than the best distilled

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

otto of roses. Rain descending from the sky was nothing but rose-water. The air was redolent with the incense of burning resin.

Eatables needed no growing there,—air, water, woodlands supplied food and could do so for thousands and thousands of years, and none would need take the trouble of tilling the soil; there would be something to apprehend only in case population were to go on increasing without any limit. There was to be no house or dwelling, nor any beds either,—soft scented grass agreeable to the touch formed delightful cushions for rest. Viswamitra made pleasant retreats in the hills throughout his earth for shelter during the rains. The roads there were all covered in to shut out the scorching rays of the sun and kept cool with supplies of ice at midday. When it was grilling hot in the fields it needed but stepping into these shaded roads to cool oneself to his heart's content. Viswamitra was himself ever enamoured of the beauty of Nature; so he furnished facilities for ascents to the tops of the hills. He also devised various means to enable men to scrutinise constantly everything in existence from the top-most summits of the hills to the lowest depths of the sea.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

5

THE NEW MAN.

AND men?—They were of a new type in the new earth. The creation was after Viswamitra's own choice: his men were all full of happiness, and inclinations that led to suffering had never any existence. Intellects of the very highest order had openings for development. Viswamitra had a conviction that Brahmans never came into existence from out of the mouth of Brahma.[a] He believed that it was through the culture of the higher faculties of the mind that they had attained their supremacy as Brahmans, but that selfishness having latterly got mastery over them they had entirely lost all sense of shame. So, with the object of giving all men equal facilities for the development of their intellect, Viswamitra set up numerous educational institutions and seats of learning everywhere. There were no particular people set apart for teaching the higher moralities and modes of Government, but all were to join in the performance of this work. Reason was the only adorable

(a) See note (a) p. 13.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

deity and there was no other object of devotion. It was the goddess of Reason alone that everybody daily worshipped.

And the feeling of mutual attachment? —They were all exceedingly loving. All stood on a footing of equality. Any one advancing a step in any sphere would benefit all others with his knowledge and bring them up to his level. In Viswamitra's earth all men were fair and handsome; it was seldom, if ever, that ugliness met one's eyes. So fascinating was the expression in every one's features that they would feel charmed at the very sight of one another. There was no bowing or nodding or shaking of hands there when they met, but only warm embraces close and hearty. All were busy, all advancing in the path of progress. With new energy men on the new earth moved about in every direction: they would from time to time ascend the hill-tops with the object of making discoveries of scientific truths and occasionally dive into the bottom of the sea to unravel its mysteries, or float up into the sky employed in a variety of other pursuits. All were thus actively engaged in quest of their own improvement, of that of the society in which they moved and of man in general.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

5

THE NEW MAN.

AND men ?—They were of a new type in the new earth. The creation was after Viswamitra's own choice : his men were all full of happiness, and inclinations that led to suffering had never any existence. Intellects of the very highest order had openings for development. Viswamitra had a conviction that Brahmans never came into existence from out of the mouth of Brahma.[a] He believed that it was through the culture of the higher faculties of the mind that they had attained their supremacy as Brahmans, but that selfishness having latterly got mastery over them they had entirely lost all sense of shame. So, with the object of giving all men equal facilities for the development of their intellect, Viswamitra set up numerous educational institutions and seats of learning everywhere. There were no particular people set apart for teaching the higher moralities and modes of Government, but all were to join in the performance of this work. Reason was the only adorable

(a) See note (a) p. 13.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

deity and there was no other object of devotion. It was the goddess of Reason alone that everybody daily worshipped.

And the feeling of mutual attachment? —They were all exceedingly loving. All stood on a footing of equality. Any one advancing a step in any sphere would benefit all others with his knowledge and bring them up to his level. In Viswamitra's earth all men were fair and handsome; it was seldom, if ever, that ugliness met one's eyes. So fascinating was the expression in every one's features that they would feel charmed at the very sight of one another. There was no bowing or nodding or shaking of hands there when they met, but only warm embraces close and hearty. All were busy, all advancing in the path of progress. With new energy men on the new earth moved about in every direction: they would from time to time ascend the hill-tops with the object of making discoveries of scientific truths and occasionally dive into the bottom of the sea to unravel its mysteries, or float up into the sky employed in a variety of other pursuits. All were thus actively engaged in quest of their own improvement, of that of the society in which they moved and of man in general.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

No marriage tie prevailed in Viswamitra's world; but even without it, such was the nature of love that once the hearts got blended together, there would hardly, if ever, be a separation. Even if there were, neither would live with any other person without waiting three years for re-union. None would find any fault even with such a course; all had mastery over their senses. Serious crimes such as carrying off other's properties and the like were unknown.

All were adepts in music and the other fine arts. Singing or music, dancing or theatricals had their daily rounds everywhere in which all would join. New festivities prevailed every day throughout this earth. There was no king or general to dread. Everything came to pass as they all agreed it should. Making investigations into the mysterious properties of all things and pleasing one's neighbours, were the daily avocations of men on Viswamitra's earth.

Pleasure — joy — happiness cause men to dance in the lightness of their hearts. All the causes that lead to differences between man and man Viswamitra had very carefully eliminated from the human mind.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

None had any thirst for riches or hankerings after glory or any inclination for domination. Amusements alone held sway: one would share another's pleasures to-day and the latter would join in his entertainments the day following.

In Viswamitra's earth men did not die, but passed away to another planet; and thus they wandered till they came back to the earth after seven or eight such rounds. Birth was of two kinds there: new births and repeated births. New births were limited in number and only a specified number would be born daily; the rest of the births were merely repeated ones. Viswamitra's earth was in existence only for a very short space of time; there is no knowing what would have been the case if the new births were numerous.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

6

THE BIRTH OF POESY.

VALMIKI was meanwhile wandering about in the Himalayan forests weeping and lamenting. There was no end to his lamentation or to the anguish of his heart; and as he meditated what a world of sins he had committed and how to make atonement for them, his heart would become distracted and he would have no rest anywhere in peace. He would not see the robbers any more. They searched about for him in vain but could not come across him. The sight of men would fan the flame consuming his heart. He began to make the woods his abode in fellowship with the birds and beasts who shared his sorrows; he would there feed and bathe some of them or tenderly caress some others. Thus it was that he passed his days.

One of these days a pair of *Crounchas*[a] were employed in loving disports. One would fall upon the other billing and fondling, now receding, now hopping up to close contact. Now would this one turn about and fall upon the other and the other would

(a) A species of crane.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

then do the same; thus they flew from branch to branch uttering inarticulate sounds and wheeling about upon their quivering wings. Valmiki sat entranced watching their diversions, and thought, "How much happier are they than I! Why do I not rove about thus immersed in pleasures? I also have enough of companions!" He could not reflect any more. Old memories revived and distracted his heart anew.

Thus was he musing when an arrow all on a sudden struck and brought down one of the birds which writhed on the ground in dying agonies. A fowler ran up to pluck off the plumes. Valmiki's voice rang out, "Sinful miscreant! —

"Never, O Nishád[a] be thine to achieve
Through years eternal renown fair,
For an amorous Crouncha hast thou kill'd.
One of the love-enraptur'd pair!"[b]

No sooner were these words uttered than Valmiki perceived a beautiful maiden

(*a*) A man of a degraded tribe in general, an outcast (especially the son of a Brahman by a Sudra woman). The Nishadas are certain wild non-Aryan aboriginal tribes described as hunters, fishermen, robbers, &c.

(*b*) The original couplet in Sanskrit has been reputed to be *the first* utterance of man in verse, —a feeling of kindliness outraged finding vent in poesy.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

emerging from out of the flowing cascade lighting up the forest path with her radiance. The elegance of her beauty would shame the *Apsarás*; it charmed the heart and was more soothing and pleasant than the beams of the full moon. All were filled with wonder at the sight of the sweet loveliness of the beauteous maid. The fowler who had extended his arm to take hold of the bird remained dumb-founded. Birds and beasts became silent. The beauteous damsel came and stood in front of Valmiki, who found no words to speak, nor would she allow him time to do so.

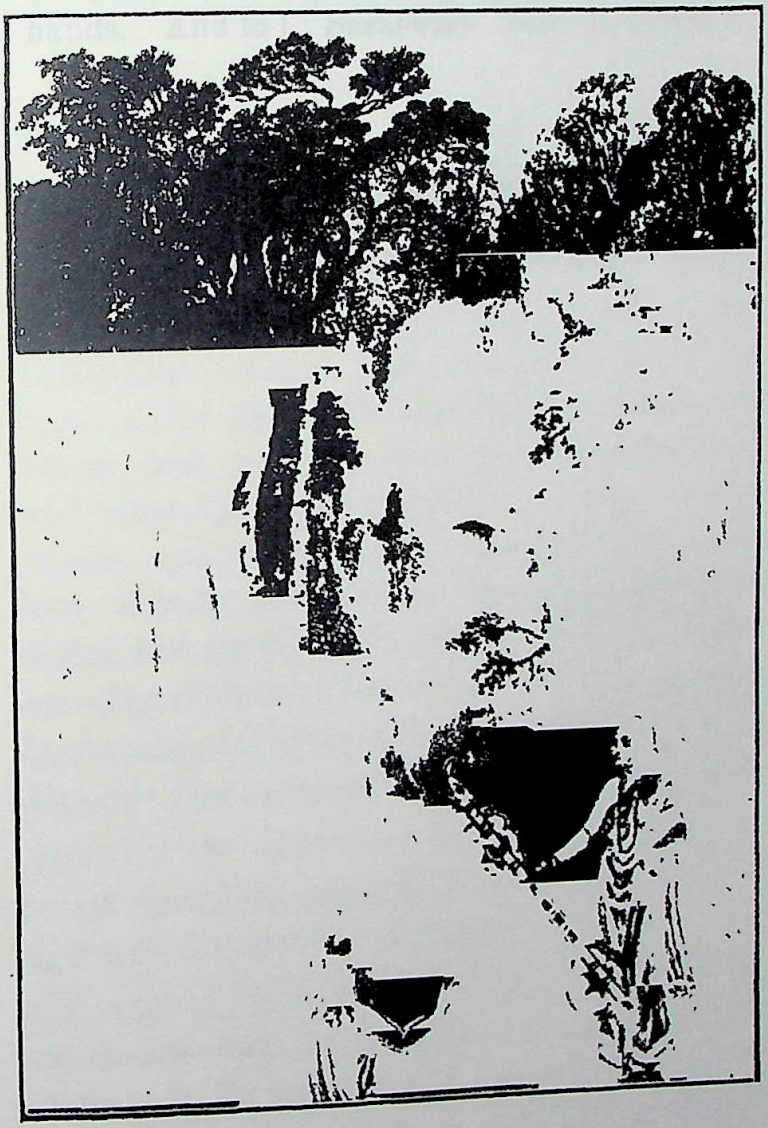
"Valmiki," asid She, "do not be astonished. I am *Saraswati*,[a] the tutelary deity of the Brahmans. I never found a single one among the Brahmans so soft of heart as thou. I have, therefore, come to present thee with this *Vina*.[b] It will adorn thy hands and those of men like thee for all time to come. Ye are to adopt the vow of doing good to other men, for whose weal only are ye to use it."

(*a*) See Note p. 40.

(*b*) The Indian lute (an instrument of the guitar kind usually having seven wires raised upon nineteen frets or supports fixed on a long rounded board towards the ends of which are two large gourds).

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



'I have, therefore, come to present thee with this Vina.'

p. 70

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

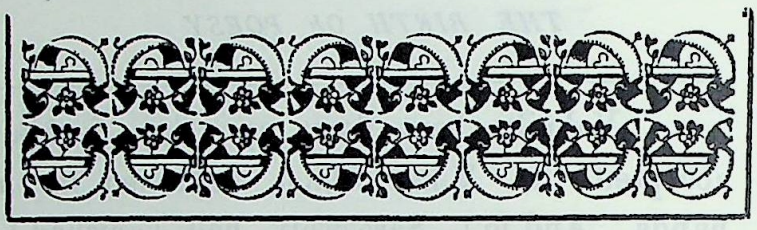
CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Valmiki bent down upon her feet and accepted the Vina which remained in his hands. And lo! Saraswati had vanished!

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



PART FIFTH.

THE OLD WORLD.

THAT happened on the old earth after Viswamitra left it to create his new world, can be very easily imagined. Confusion, anarchy and plunder were the order of the day, and streams of blood flowed incessantly. Often do we find periods of anarchy described in history. The terrible events that happened after the downfall of the Yavana kingdom up till the establishment of the present regime in India are without any parallel in any other part of the world. But these were not to be

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

compared to a hundredth part of what took place while Viswamitra had gone to accomplish his work of creating a new world.

Roughly speaking, there were then four races on earth, Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Rakshashas[a] and Vanaras.[b] Viswamitra had broken up and destroyed the kingdoms of the Yavanas, the Mlechhas and the Huns. Most of their kings had been killed in the battle-field. Many had fled and taken refuge under Vasishta's protection. Where the others had gone to there was no knowing, and anarchy overran their kingdoms. Plunderers and marauders formed into bands and looted in the day-time; they burned the cities, and whole towns fell to their swords. Valmiki had then given up the leadership of the greatest of the robber gangs. But his company had not disbanded. They

(*a*) The inhabitants, according to the *Ramayana*, of Lanka or Ceylon where resided their chief Ravana. They were the relentless enemies of the gods, and some of them were demons: imps, goblins, disturbing sacrifices and ensnaring and even devouring human beings.

(*b*) Literally, manlike or monkeys. These inhabitants of forests were the allies of Rama in his fight with Ravana described in the *Ramayana* for the recovery of his wife Sita.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

had made a *Chandála*[a] named Guhaka their captain and had commenced looting the whole of Hindusthan. At Jamunotri[b] would they be plundering one day and at Prayag[c] on the morrow, or at the confluence of the Satadru[d] this day and on the bank of the Saraju[e] the day after. Looking at the robber bands about these times, it would seem as if all classes had come down to the same level as was to happen on the advent of the *Kali Yuga*.[f] In the larger bands, Mlechhas, Yavanas, Rakshashas, Vanaras, Kshatriyas and Brahmans, all ate and slept together, all engaged in the same occupation and enjoyed the same pleasures, and lived amidst much display of pomp and splendour. Massacre and pillage were their sole occupations and they got beyond control even of the gods. It were something had there been at least a single powerful kingdom in existence or a single nation been supreme

(*a*) An outcast, the generic name for a man of the lowest and most despised of the mixed tribes, born from a Sudra father and Brahman mother.

(*b*) High peaks in the Himalaya mountains among which the celebrated river Jamuna rises.

(*c*) Modern Allahabad.

(*d*) The Sutlej in the Punjab.

(*e*) In Oudh.

(*f*) See Appendix (I).

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

during this age of terrible anarchy. But that was not to be. There were rival factions in every place and disunion among all nations. The party which had the regal powers were exceedingly atrocious, and the atrocities of the robbers and marauders were a thousand times better than theirs. The latter merely murdered, but the former killed their victims by inches causing them sufferings untold.

Ravana[a] was about this time a very powerful monarch. His chief amusement lay in carrying off other men's wives, robbing treasures, sacking kingdoms, ill treating people and causing pain out of pure fun. His brother Bibhishana was opposed to him in his own country. Ravana had him thrown into prison and had the nose and ears of one of his chief ministers cut off for speaking a word in his brother's favor. There was some likelihood of Bibhishana's contracting friendship with king Sugriba[b] of the Vanara

(a) The notorious Rakshasha king of Ceylon who stole Sita the wife of Rama, the hero of the great epic Ramayana, which event ultimately brought about his ruin. He had ten heads and twenty arms symbolizing strength. He is the Satan of the Ramayana, the impersonation of Evil.

(b) The Vanara king, the ally of Rama whom he helped in the recovery of his wife.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

kingdom. Against the latter, therefore, he had sent two of his most cruel and reckless generals Khara and Dushana to the forests of Dandaka.[a]

In the Vanara kingdom King Bāli[b] had turned out the party that was opposed to him. He used to live with his brother's wife. The depredations of his followers turned thriving human habitations into terrible untenanted deserts. The forests of Dandaka that we now hear of were once the site of a very prosperous kingdom which the enormities of king Bali converted into a silent depopulated woodland and the abode of lions and tigers and other beasts of prey.

Among the Brahmans there were two parties,—but why speak of two parties? —Everyone rather stood by himself independently. These self-sufficient personages might, however, be divided into two classes. The chief among one of them was Parasurama who was determined upon wiping out the very name Kshatriya from the earth. But Parasurama was ill-disposed towards every body. He had built himself a residence on

(a) A district in the Deccan between the Nermada and Godaveri rivers.

(b) The eldest brother of Sugriba who was ultimately killed by Rama.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the sea-side and used to live there. The Brahmans having neglected to act up to his advice, the Kshatriyas had again grown powerful. So he desired the destruction of both. Himself he deemed as good as a myriad. He would never join the Brahmans in their rituals. Others again who like himself were the mortal enemies of the Kshatriyas would be guided by their own sweet will. Vasishta was the head of the other class of the Brahmans; but he too could not be the sole lord and master of his party though he had some little control over them.

One party among the Kshatríyas had been under obligations to Vasíshta for various reasons; they were untiring in their efforts towards the preservation of unity between the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas. The kings of Ayodhya and Mithila were the chief among them. Another party was as much for destroying the Brahmans as Parasurama was for extirpating the Kshatriyas. The race of Viswamitra formed the chief among this class. Vasíshta's followers excepted, all others were ready to lay down even their lives for the simple object of causing harm to each other. Viswamitra's minister would sometimes call in the Rakshasas

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Khara and Dushana to spoil the sacrificial ceremonies of the Brahmans. None would feel the least scruple in enlisting the services of ruffians and freebooters when he wanted to harass his opponents. Quarrels would often break out on the slightest of pretexts and lay vast tracts desolate. It is needless to multiply instances. A Brahman was once seized at Viswamitra's capital Kanyakubja.[a] His minister had the Brahman brought before him and caused him to be soundly belaboured with whips and rope-ends, had his nose and ears cut off and molten lead poured into the hollow of his ears. A number of dogs were then brought in and he was shut up in a cage in company with them. While screaming in agony the Brahman uttered the name of Bharadwaja. The saintly Rishi Bharadwaja was living at a little distance from the Jamuna with a large number of pupils. Sole lord of a spacious woodland, he belonged neither to Parasuram's side nor to that of Vasishta. He was of opinion that Brahmans should live aloof from all strife. He was not ready to take up the avocation even of a family priest. Nor would he have any ill-feeling against any one. He was in con-

(a) Modern Kanouj.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

sequence held in reverence by all. The minister hearing the name of Bharadwaja fall from the lips of the agonised and dying Brahman took him to be a spy of Bharadwaja and killed him with still greater tortures. He then gathered twenty bands of robbers and surrounded and set fire to the hermitage of Bharadwaja on the following day. It was by their supernatural power alone that Bharadwaja and a few of his pupils could save themselves; but the whole forest with its myriads of living creatures became a desert in a day.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

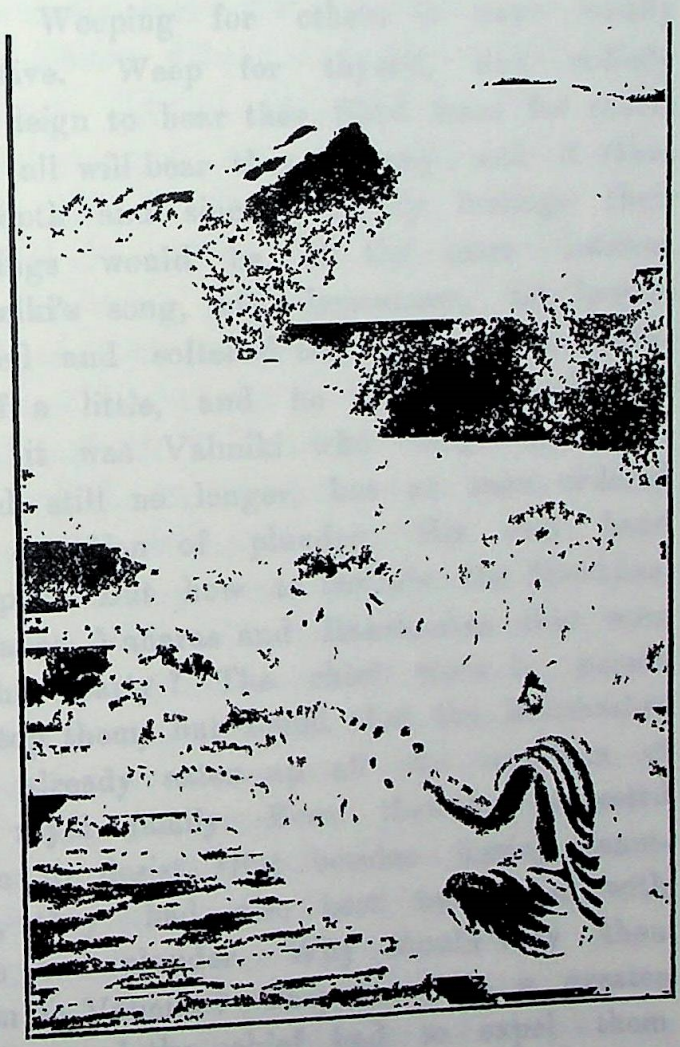
2

PEACE ON EARTH.

BLESSED with the possession of the Vina of the goddess Saraswati and having had a taste of the sweets of poetry, Valmiki left the Himalayan forests and came to the habitations of man. His heart melted at the terrible sights he witnessed there and he began to weep bitterly. Perhaps it was out of *his* eyes that tears of compassion fell for the first time at the sight of human misery. How many are there who shed such tears? Each such drop is a priceless gem, each goes to quell a thousand atrocities! Weeping thus and singing, Valmiki wandered through the whole of Hindusthan. Means of prevention he knew not, but all the same he could endure no further. One day he sat by the bank of a stream playing upon his Vina and adding to its current by his gushing tears, when a terrible sound from a distance assailed his ears. It was first like the shouts of robbers engaged in the work of spoliation, and then it changed to plaintive wails. Valmiki could wait no longer, but ran towards the sound. Advancing a long way, his eyes lighted upon

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



'Sat by the bank of a stream playing upon his Vina.'

p. 80

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the sacking of a very large city. Valmiki came up with his Vina and caught hold of the hands of the robber chief, saying, "Give up this work."

Weeping for others is ever widely effective. Weep for thyself, and nobody will deign to hear thee. Shed tears for others and all will bear thee company ; and if there is depth and sincerity in thy feelings their wailings would be all the more intense. Valmiki's song, his demeanour, his lament moved and softened the heart of the robber chief a little, and he at once made out that it was Valmiki who sang. He could stand still no longer, but at once ordered the cessation of plunder. His own band stopped. But how to restrain the Mlechhas, Yavanas, Vanaras and Rakshashas that were in his party ? The chief went in person to stop them, but found that the Rakshashas had already eaten up all the members of the royal family. Even then he requested them to desist. But besides bening cannibals, they had also been intoxicated with wine and plunder. Why should they then listen to Valmiki ? They flew into a greater passion and the chief had to expel them from the city by main force. But no sooner had they come out of its precincts than

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

they joined the Mlechhas and the Vanaras and attacked the camp of the robber chief with formidable energy and vigour, so that it was with difficulty that the chief could enter his own camp. The sight that struck his eyes there filled him with wonder.

He saw Valmiki playing upon his Vina and singing *"Brother, O My brother !"* and all the robbers were weeping,—thousands of warriors shedding tears in silence. All those to whom killing men was their main calling and means of livelihood had thrown away their weapons and were now weeping. The united force of the Rakshashas and others had been surrounding them, but they cast not so much as a glance at them. As the Rakshashas attacked them fiercely the strains of Valmiki's song rose higher, ever full of supplications for mercy and of pictures of human sorrow, and they touched the heart of every man to the core. The Rakshashas also began by degrees to listen to it fascinated by its influence. All the robbers fell into the same condition that Valmiki had fallen into after hearing the Ribhus. Be he a Yavana or a Mlechha, a Rakshasha or a Vanara, everyone lay as under the power of a spell, and feelings of compassion grew strong in every heart. The

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

song seemed to say, "Forbear, brothers, forbear; after all that has been done, do so no more. Fancy, if the case was yours how would you feel? Are not all equally human and of the same flesh and blood as you are? Think what pain you feel if you are hurt. Trifling harm carries you beside yourselves, and yet you hesitate not to strike with a sword upon another's head! Attempt to realise how he feels at the time. Without a pang do you cut off the heads of other men's children, ponder how you would feel if your own were in a similar plight!" The hearers wept violently and rolled on the earth, exclaiming, "Save us, master, tell us the means!"

The song went on, "Call all men brothers; all are your kin and none is a stranger. All are human alike: as you feel the cold of winter, so do the rest; as you perspire in the summer, so do the rest; the rains wet them as they wet you. What then is the distinction between you and the rest of them? So unite together all, and attune your life to one note. I am thine, be thou mine! The same grass serves us all for bed, the same earth supplies space for all to live in; the same sun gives light to all, the same moon soothes all our hearts.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Why should our lives then keep apart ?" What else the song did sing, who can say ? How long, who can reckon ? How much longer can this insignificant bird descant upon Valmiki's divine song ?

The singing resulted in everyone throwing off his robber's attire. All rolled at Valmiki's feet, and their chief Guhaka Chandala grasped them weeping. Valmiki asked them to desist from touching his feet, and said, "I am neither a god, nor an avatar, nor a king. I am the same as you all are. There is no good in falling at my feet. Sins you have committed, do so no more. Change the course of your life, move in a righteous path, and you will be happy."

It was while Valmiki had thus been exhorting all, that the survivors among the citizens were seen coming forth from the city, —some lame, some blind, others with scalded bodies, some carrying their aged parents and others pressing their wounded and dying children to their bosoms. They knew that the royal family had been eaten up by the cannibal Rakshashas, and considering it unsafe to abide where anarchy prevailed, each was making for some place where he had a relation or friend. Valmiki

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

pointed towards them and said, "Look, look at the memorials of your glory!" and tears coursed copiously down his breast as he said so. Repentence made them all realise the immensity of their guilt and they turned deadly pale. Valmiki then said, "Go and bring them back." But no sooner did they approach the citizens than these screamed in fright and prepared to flee. Then it was that they made out that the wicked would never be trusted even if they spoke the truth. They requested Valmiki to persuade them to return. But how could the citizens know that he too was not himself a robber?

Valmiki, however, made them return, this time also by his song. So tenderly did he begin by craving their forgiveness, and in strains of such touching sweetness, that their hearts were filled with compassion; and at his persuasion they came back to the city. They implored him to be their king, for it was not advisable to live in a place where there was none. Valmiki declined, but he installed the robber chieftain Guhaka Chandala as the king of that locality. All the united Mlechhas, Yavanas, Vanaras and Rakshashas lived together happily in Guhaka's kingdom and never so much as talked about robbery; and the propensity

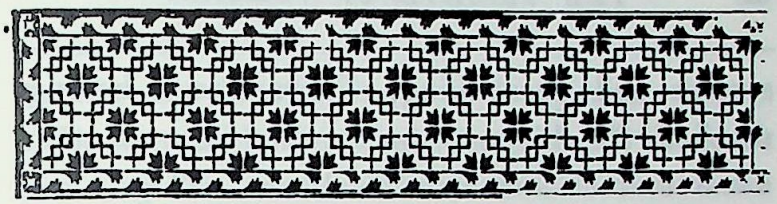
CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

for predatory expeditions wholly died away among them. But if others came to molest them they were vigorously repulsed. A kingdom of peace was thus established on earth. But Valmiki entertained fears about its stability and doubted if such a large number of robbers could live united. He would come to see Guhaka once every month, and roam singing all over the earth at other times as his heart dictated.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



PART SIXTH.

THE FLYING CITY.

WITH resistless vigour did Viswamitra protect his new creation as he would his own offspring. He would not mind risking even his life itself in his attempts to increase his people's comforts and to ensure to them the enjoyment of happiness during the full term of their lives. But what was it all to him personally? In the excitement of work he had so long no occasion to think of himself. He was the sole lord of his own creation.

A common mortal having no company and none to open his heart to, often finds his senses going astray. This mighty per-

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

sonage and great king, Viswamitra, having reached the highest step in his new creation came to feel his own loneliness. There was everything, but where was happiness? What of himself?

He mixed with the men in his creation. But where were the people with whom he had spent all the days of his life and who would understand his weal and woe? The people of the new world were no doubt happy. But Viswamitra was an earthly being and it was his destiny to suffer. Where was the person to look up to his face if he felt grief or grew distracted? —Great became his mental agony!

Thus passed a few days, and at last he desired to have some men of the old earth brought over to the new. With this object he built a large city to accomodate Kanyakubja therein. There being no fear of enemies in the new creation, there were no walls or moats made round the city which was filled with comfortable habitations and imposing palaces. Viswamitra came to the earth. He arrived at Kanyakubja and interviewed the minister, and saw the members of his family. He felt that a solitary man, even if he were a god on earth, could never

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

attain the happiness of one living among his own kith and kin. Once he felt inclined to stay on earth. Then, as he contrasted the powers he wielded here with those he wielded there in his new earth, and as he recalled to mind all about the Brahmans of the earth, he made preparations to take his own people to his new world.

The whole city of Kanyakubja began to rise very slowly into the air. Men on earth looked with astonishment at the wondrous sight. Strains of charming music from the flying city began to float on the air. All the people therein began to dance. But after they had ascended a certain height their pleasure soon changed to grief. They could hardly breathe and their throats began to choke. Viswamitra tried to attract the air of the earth, but it would not come. He was thus plunged into a great difficulty. He attempted to create an earthly atmosphere, but failed.

He then invoked Brahma, and on the latter's arrival he said, "Do you like to quarrel with me still? I wish to go to my creation with my own people. Why do you oppose?"

Brahma replied: "You have in working out your creation already exhausted all the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

power your austerities had furnished you with. You have no further capacity to do anything more. Attempt anything new and your creation will come to an end. I adjure you, be calm and act in accord with reason."

"Big as thy mouth is so are thy words, wretch! And me dost thou enjoin to proceed with reason! Look how I bring air from my own earth and take them up." Saying this Viswamitra departed swiftly towards his new world.

The city of Kanyakubja now began to fall rapidly. Brahma seeing his own creation going to be thus destroyed, brought it down slowly and set it again on its former site. Viswamitra's followers now began to practise horrible oppressions upon the Brahmans, and having joined the Rakshashas began to harass them in various ways.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

2

THE END OF THE NEW CREATION.

VISWAMITRA attempted to guide a current of air from his own creation through the vast void, but he could not. Beside himself with anger he invoked the presence of Brahma again. Upon his arrival Viswamitra said, "Open me a path to carry my air through the vacant space."

Brahma replied: "You lack the power acquired by austerities to enable you to do so. And if you have it not, I can give you none."

Blind with rage, Viswamitra wanted to imprison Brahma, but he could not. Exasperated, he raised his club and resolved to demolish Brahma's creation. Brahma said, "Rest as you are; attempt to do anything new and your own creation will go to pieces."

Viswamitra dismissed Brahma with insulting words. Then he raised his club, but it fell from his hand. He took it up fiercely a second time, and cracks and fissures appeared on his own earth. And as he began brandishing his club, the very joints, as it were, of his earth began to go

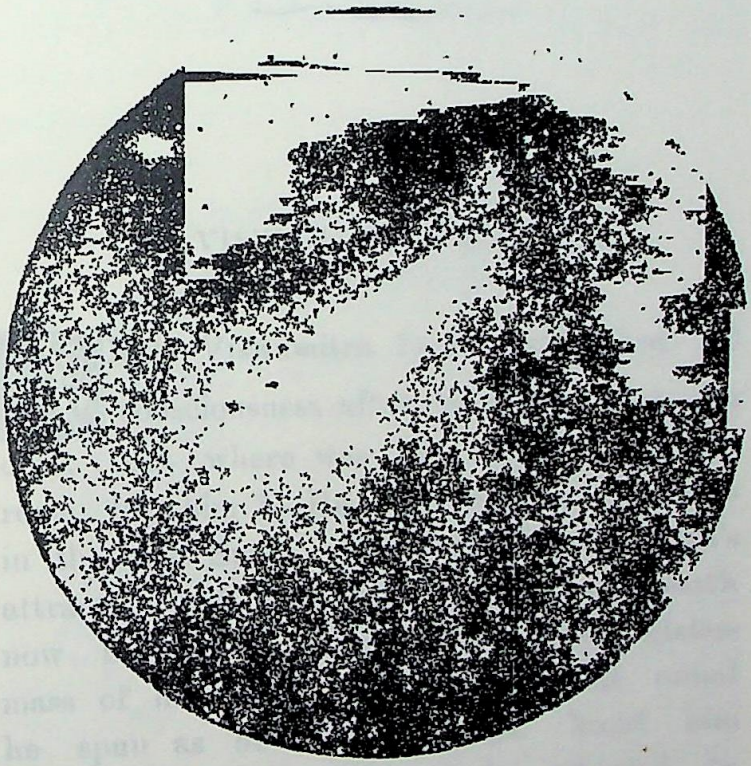
CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

asunder. His object was to strike at the centre of the universe. At this he aimed and for this he swung his club round and round; but the components of his world drew further apart; and as he continued this motion the whole of his creation was once more reduced to its original nebular state. Viswamitra flung away his club, and the nebulœ he had collected together sped away with tremendous force towards the places they had come from. The vast cavern of endless space resumed its feeble light as before. The stars the nebulœ had attracted along with them, regained their former positions. Like a drop in the ocean the new creation vanished in a moment into the vast inane. The north-east corner of the sky that appeared from the earth as full of shining stars, now grew void again. The comforts and pleasures that the new men of Viswamitra's earth enjoyed ceased to have existence. The men themselves also merged again into the unformed atoms. Those pleasant hills and rocks and that beautiful earth itself with all its palaces and walls and royal pathways were once again converted into their primal and shapeless atoms. That same society where there was no oppression and no distinction between the high and the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

low, where all was amity and unity and equality, also sank in the endless void.

3

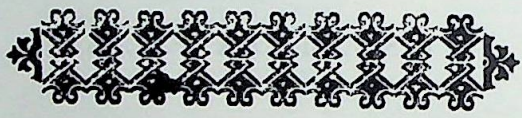
VISWAMITRA FALLS.

AND Viswamitra ?—He had lost all consciousness after he threw away his club. But where was he ? Was there any room for him ?—He had become senseless in the vast Space. Till then his own earth's attraction had held him up ; but our earth now began to attract the almost lifeless mass of his huge body. Round and round he spun as he fell. Brahma loved him exceedingly, hence it was he returned to him numbers of times though abused and had also repeatedly attempted to make him a Brahman. He now perceived that Viswamitra would soon die for want of air to breathe. He therefore drew air from the earth and held it before him. The latter did not lose his life but remained unconscious and kept on whirling round and round

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

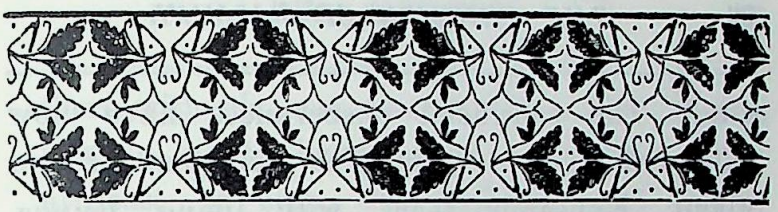
Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

in space as he continued his career downwards. He began to bleed through the mouth and his frame swelled. And he fell lower and lower—through what a length of time who can say?



CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



PART SEVENTH.

THE SACRIFICE.

IMMINENT seems the annihilation of the earth to-day! Should it outlive this day then only will the creatures called men continue their existence therein. If it come out safe to-day then only will the Brahmans and other classes exist in the world. Indeed the safety of the very creation depends upon its preservation this day.

The king of Kausambi[a] is to perform his *Yagna*[b] to-day, and all that roam over the earth or the air or both have been in-

(*a*) Name of an ancient city on the Ganges in the lower part of the Doab.

(*b*) Sacrifice preceded and followed by elaborate ceremonials.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

vited. The sacrificial observances have now extended over a year. The vast plains round about Kausambi teem with living beings. None, however, feel easy at heart. Great as is the feeling of hostility and enmity prevailing in all quarters in this vast sea of congregated humanity, the slightest incident might any moment bring about some terrible catastrophe. And so in fact does it happen presently.

The king of Kausambi belonged to the solar race of kings and was favourably disposed towards the Brahmans. He appointed Vasishta his priest to perform the ceremony, upon which the partisans of Viswamitra and Parasurama grew furious. The minister of Viswamitra got Khara, Dushana and King Bali to side with him. He had long been engaged in winning over a large number of very powerful robber chiefs to his side by offers of money. They now came and joined him. The Brahmans on Vasishta's side and the kings of Ajodhya and Mithila made ready to secure the due performance of the sacrifice. The Parads and the Huns who had been under Vasishta's protection now stood in arms near the place of the sacrifice to defend him. Guhaka, the king of the peaceful realms, was also present

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

there with his own people. His first attempt was to be to bring about a settlement, or at least to stop the fighting, and failing in either, to fight against the party that would be in the wrong.

And Valmiki?—He was moving about, grasping every one by the hand, and weeping and lamenting; but none heeded him. Even stony hearts would melt—such were Valmiki's wailings! But those who profess to be politicians, those who belong to the higher order and vaunt their enlightenment, those who scruple not to sacrifice even their darling wives and children to keep their power intact,—the hearts of such are surely composed of materials harder than stone! Those who play with human beings and feel not the slightest compunction in causing the gravest of harms to millions of men, even to the length of the destruction of their lives, for serving some very small ends of their own,—can the hearts of such be melted by weepings and lamentations? Be that as it might, Valmiki knew no rest. He went now to Vasishta and then again to Khara and Dushana taking them by the hand. The soldiers and the people assembled were being violently moved by his lamentations, but the exalted ones, the politicians, were bereft of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

all mercy and tenderness, and would not so much as cast even a look at him.

Vasishta at last commanded the sacrificial fire to be lighted and the priests who officiated ascended the altar. Valmiki's hopes died out. He wept and rolled on the ground in front of Guhaka who tried to console him. Everybody knew that blood would begin to flow as soon as the sacrificial fire would be lighted. No sooner was it heard that the Brahmans had got up to the altar than the party opposed stood by its side in arms and in an attitude of readiness. The sacrificial party stood on the other side to repel them. Guhaka stood just in front to interpose between them if necessary. Valmiki ascended the altar, snatched away the fire from the hands of the Brahmans, and sat down in the central hollow of the altar. The Brahmans drew him out and pushed him aside; and three hundred assisting priests were about to tie him up by the arms and legs so that he might not go there any more. There was thus a 'great commotion. The Brahmans had again made ready to light the fire, when behold!—whence did a few drops of water fall upon the body of the Brahmans all on a sudden? It was cloudless above,—still the drops fell! The

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

water must be impure the Brahmans concluded, and they considered themselves unclean, and withdrew to purify themselves by bathing. For a few moments the impending destruction was put off. A strange and undefinable sensation and vague apprehensions pervaded the minds of all. All, however, realised that something like a fierce battle was about to be fought.

2

UNCONSCIOUS MUSINGS.

VISWAMITRA had been falling down and down. Even thus as he was Brahma caused his senses to return by degrees. How can a human being translate the feelings working in his mind as he came to himself? 'Where am I,' thought he and attempted to open his eyes. He saw and closed them again and lost consciousness. Again he revived and again his senses left him. His consciousness returned once more, but forsook him again. 'Where am I going,'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

thought he. Once he fancied the nether regions of hell were close and fear robbed him again of his senses.

Once he pondered, 'Where is my creation,'—and became senseless. 'That is gone for good,' thought he, 'but if I had stayed on the earth!'—and he lost consciousness. 'Why have I been so ambitious,—why did I aspire to be great,—why take to the austerities,—why long for conquests,—O! why did I lose all? I know not where I am going to—have not strength to turn back—nor even to look on!'

Viswamitra wept as he reflected thus, and it was his fast-dropping tears that had fallen upon the body of the Brahmans. Weeping made him weaker; again his senses forsook him, and he fancied he heard the Ribhus singing the song of brotherhood and saying, "If man had made no attempt to lord over his fellows, how long ago had they all been brothers! Had the king done his duty, all would have been brothers long long ago." As he thus listened to the song in his fancy, Viswamitra was forming a resolve in his heart of hearts never more to harbour ambition there. Just then he awoke, and now revived into consciousness he determined to dedicate his life to the work of doing

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

good to others. Again he became insensible and continued his ceaseless career downwards.

2

THE TRIUMPH OF VALMIKI.

WHEN the Brahmans returned they perceived some huge object in the shape of a human figure coming down towards the fire-place in the hollow of the altar. All looked up in that direction. Their very souls parched up with fear. The strange sight struck every one dumb with awe and astonishment. Those who had been holding Valmiki let him go. Valmiki ran towards the fire-place in the altar and saw an immense human frame lying there. By his supernatural powers he at once discerned the almost lifeless body to be that of Viswamitra, and then his laments knew no bounds. His Vina wailed in the tenderest of strains and tears coursed down and wetted his bosom. He sang, "Look on, insignificant, little men, look and see to what pass has destiny

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

brought this Viswamitra—the great one who had once created a universe and had risen even above Brahma! Mark how pitiable is the plight of that great warrior—that great ascetic—that wonderful *Man!* You run mad after your petty pleasures and sorrows;—see how Viswamitra's creation has disappeared, his lofty position of a creator gone, how the very manhood he was born in is perchance no more, nor now a vestige of life even left! Try to conceive what anguish he feels! If such is to be the end of Viswamitra, ponder what you are and what your end might be! See Brahma is beside himself to-day weeping for Viswamitra. Vasishta who had suffered so much at his hands is now weeping tenderly for him. So leave off your disputes and dissensions and be calm. For a few brief days it is that this *life* lasts!"

All listened in silence to the pathetic laments of Valmiki's Vina. All hearts were softened and became filled with remorse. All wept bitterly and threw away their arms and missiles, and with them their quarrels and disputes too. By degrees a decisive change came over their minds.

Viswamitra now began to revive. The strains of the Vina reached his ears like

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

sounds of distant music. He had been unconscious and dreaming of terrible things. His frame gradually cooled and after long he opened his eyes. Valmiki's song went on. Its mild rebukes and gentle solicitations for mercy began to pierce his heart as with arrows. As soon as he opened his eyes they lighted upon Brahma standing just in front. Before the assembled populace too the divine figure of Brahma became gradually manifest with those of the Devarshis and Brahmarshis who had come down with him. His body bathed in tears, Viswamitra with folded hands craved his pardon and wept. Brahma at once took him up in his arms and kissed and embraced him saying, "Child, you have become a Brahman to-day." Viswamitra wept again and fell at his feet. Valmiki's song proceeded.

Struck with Brahma's kindness Viswamitra asked, 'Lord, where am I ?' 'On the earth,' replied Brahma,—'I shall at once make an end of thy sufferings.' Saying this he sprinkled his body with the celestial water from his *kamandalu* which animated him with renewed strength. Viswamitra stood up and looked : the whole world was weeping and yonder was a man singing !

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Vasishta came up quickly and embraced Viswamitra. His mind had been filled with pity in the days of Viswamitra's afflictions. Those feelings that had impelled him to oppose Viswamitra when he attempted to be a Brahman were now no more; they had all been cast away; harshness had all been softened. With his own hands he now placed the Sacred Thread,[a] duly sanctified, round the neck of Viswamitra, and said, "Brother, we become one to-day. Thou art a Brahman. Come, let us embrace." Viswamitra replied, "O Saint, intoxicated with good luck, I had unconsciously caused thee much pain and trouble and used harsh language towards thee. Thine eyes have shed tears to-day at my afflictions, but never for a day did I weep at thy sorrows. It is thy kindness to-day that draws tears from my eyes for the first time. It is now I come to learn that Brahmans are exceedingly kind.—And Brahma! Thou art the Creator. O! How I insulted thee and even wanted to chain thee in prison! And thou hast conferred life on me in my adversity to-day. Boundless is thy mercy!" To which

(a) The thread or cord worn by the first three classes of the Hindus over the left shoulder and under the right arm.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Brahma replied, "Vain were the attribute of forgiveness to the Creator, child, if he would not forgive a being so great as thyself!"

Following Vasishta and Viswamitra, Brahmans and Kshatriyas all threw off their military garments and embraced each other; and divulging their secret evil intents they begged each other's pardon. Guhaka Chandala seeing such a happy termination of the terrible time he had feared for began to dance for joy.

The king of Kausambi had at first been very much grieved at the turn his sacrifice had taken, but after witnessing this termination of it, he too was elated with joy and made Viswamitra's investment with the sacred thread an occasion to give away lavishly all the vast stores he had collected for the sacrifice.

Valmiki was dancing in his joy singing the song of brotherhood. He embraced every one he found near him,—those who could be touched and those who should not be[a]—Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas,[b]

(a) The three twice-born castes, Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas would consider themselves polluted if touched by the lower class pariahs.

(b) The third caste among the Hindus whose business is agriculture and trade.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Mlechhas, Yavanas, Rakshashas, Vanaras, without any distinction. At last he came dancing and singing towards Brahma and embraced him as well, but as he recognised him and was about to be put somewhat out of countenance, the latter embraced him again, and said, 'Valmiki, thine is all the victory to-day.' Vasishta came from where he was at a distance and embraced him, saying, 'Valmiki, thine is all the triumph this day.' '*Victory, Victory to Valmiki,*' sounded from all the four quarters. Guhaka's people cried aloud, '*Victory, Victory to Valmiki.*' Echo repeated from all directions, '*Victory, Victory to Valmiki* !'

Night drew near, and with eyes moist with tears all bent their steps homewards. All hoped that anarchy was now over. Viswamitra gave up his kingly position as soon as he became a Brahman, and his heirs installed themselves in the kingdom of Kanyakubja.

At the time of his departure, Brahma told the three Rishis that Narayana himself would descend upon the earth to establish unity among all men, and requested them to settle the course of his actions.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Viswamitra and Valmiki accompained Vasishta to his hermitage and began to consult accordingly.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

PART EIGHTH.

THE CONCEPTION OF THE RAMAYANA.

SIXTY thousand years before the advent of Rama[a] as an avatar, Viswamitra, Vasishta and Valmiki sat together to plan what he should do on earth. It was not only to decide on the best mode of composing the Ramayana that they met, but to deliberate on the establishment of brotherhood among the various nations of the earth. After the vicissitudes of fortune he had passed through, Viswamitra had realised the

(a) The seventh incarnation of Vishnu and the hero of the epic Ramayana which describes all his exploits on earth. He typifies the conquering Kshatriyas advancing southwards and subjugating the barbarous aborigines represented by the demon Ravana and his followers, the Rakshashas.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

littleness of human ability. But the ardent desire of establishing brotherhood with which the Ribhus had electrified his heart, was still as much alive in him as ever. From what Vasishta had witnessed at Kausambi, he had come to understand clearly that intellect alone was not potent enough to unite even a couple of human beings, let alone the human race itself. From the success which attended Valmiki at Kausambi, both of them had learnt that the only infallible agency to bring about union was the heart. They had further understood that none but Valmiki would attain success in making fast the bond of union. They had therefore resolved to make it the main object of their existence to assist Valmiki in his efforts to the best of their ability. Valmiki's heart, Vasishta's intellect, and Viswamitra's knowledge of the administration of government were thus laid together for establishing unity and brotherhood in the world.

After giving the matter their best consideration, they found that although the Brahmans and Kshatriyas had been united and Vasishta and Viswamitra had become friends, and the latter having attained Brahmanism there was no likelihood of collision between the two classes, still these

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

past dissensions would rankle in the memory of many. There might not be actual warfare, but still a real union of hearts might not be possible. It was therefore proposed that Rama on his advent should first unite the two races. His nativity was to be at Ajodhya [a] and he was to marry the daughter of the king of Mithila [b] and contract friendship with Guhaka Chandala and destroy Parasurama. But Valmiki was strongly opposed to all idea of destruction, and it was therefore settled that Rama should humble the pride of Parasurama. He should in this way unite the Aryans and then proceed to bring together the Non-Aryans. He should win over the virtuous among the Vanaras and kill the sinful. Valmiki again dissenting from so much destruction of life, it was determined that Rama should kill only Bali. Then he was to destroy the oppressive Rakshashas and make Bibhishana king. Valmiki objected to the slaughter of so many Rakshashas, but they would not allow this objection, for the Rakahashas were all so very tyrannical that they were past redemption. Then, after establishing peace in the Parad and other kingdoms with the

(a) Modern Oudh.

(b) Capital of Videha or modern Tirhut.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

aid of his two brothers he was to ascend to Heaven. After all had thus been settled, Valmiki was enjoined to compose a great epic depicting therein all the nine human passions and emotions.[a]

While thus charging Valmiki, Vasishta desired that Rama should be represented as the very jewel among the virtuous and should not have the least touch of sin in him.

Viswamitra added that this alone would not suffice; Rama should be a Kshatriya and a king so that his heroism and statesmanship might be clearly manifested.

Valmiki replied: "With bent head I accept your commands, O Brahmarshis! But I would make Rama neither a saint, nor a hero, nor a statesman. Narayana himself is coming down on earth. He must be an ideal Man. In delineating his character, I shall depict the ideal man and the ideal woman, the ideal husband and the ideal wife, the ideal brother and the ideal family, the ideal friend and the ideal enemy, the

(*a*) In dramatic composition the nine *Rasas* or feelings enumerated are: love, heroism, disgust, anger or fury, mirth, terror, pity, tranquility or contentment, and wonder. Some add a tenth one, viz., parental fondness.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ideal servant, the ideal king and the ideal mode of government. I shall with your blessings, draw in this connection such a form of human character as will at all times instruct and gladden the hearts of men of all races and climes."

Vasishta and Viswamitra together exclaimed, "Be it so. Let your Rama be a model for the human race for all time to come."

Thus enjoined Valmiki composed the Ramayana through his supereminent genius and recited it before Vasishta and Viswamitra. They listened and expressed their ardent admiration.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

2

THE ADVENT OF THE LORD.

THE glorious Lord, the Creator of all living beings, Narayana,[a] made his advent on earth. Following the course laid down by Vasishta, Viswamitra and Valmiki, he established the kingdom of peace on earth by succouring the good and overpowering the wicked. Under the shadow of his palms the earth became fruitful and abounded with corn and all other kinds of wealth. The wild woodlands came to be converted into prosperous cities. Rivers were covered with merchantmen and pleasure-boats. The comfort and convenience of the people increased daily. The very words thieves and robbers came to be unknown. People lost all memory of epidemics and infectious diseases and untimely death. Men's minds grew refined through the culture of music, dancing and the sixty-four allied fine arts. There was marked progress in the various arts requiring skill.

(*a*) Patronymic of the personified *Purusha* or first living Being. He is identified with Brahma and with Vishnu or Krishna. It is the seventh avatar of Vishnu, Rama, that is here referred to.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Look whichever way you would— the tops of cloud-piercing palatial mansions would reflect the sunbeams to your eyes. Go whichever way you would— charming songs and strains of music would fall sweetly on your ears. Sweet-scented flowers like the *játi*,[a] *juthi*,[b] *mallika*,[c] *málati*,[d] *vaka*,[e] *kuruvaka*,[f] *navamallika*,[g] *kashtamallika*, *ná'gkesar*,[h] *gandharaj*,[j] *vakula*,[k] bloomed in the numerous gardens everywhere; and the perfume of lotus and lilies of the various species *indibara*,[l] *kokonada*,[m] *pundarika*,[n] *kumud*,[o] *kahlár*,[p] floating in the tanks regaled the sense of smell. Abundance of timely rains brought the sorrows and sufferings of even the

(*a*) *Jasminum Grandiflora.*

(*b*) *Jasminum auriculatum.*

(*c*) *Citrus documena.*

(*d*) *Bignonia suavolens*, fragrant white flowers which open towards evening.

(*e*) *Sesbana Grandiflora.*

(*f*) Crimson amaranth.

(*g*) Arabian Jasmine, *Jasminum sambac.*

(*h*) *Mesua Roxburghii* with fragrant flowers.

(*j*) A kind of Jasmine with white flowers.

(*k*) *Mimusops Elengi.*

(*l*) The blue lotus, *Nymphosa Stellata.*

(*m*) The red lotus.

(*n*) The white lotus.

(*o*) The red lotus, *Nymphosa Robra.*

(*p*) The white esculant water-lily *Nymphosa Lotus.*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

'The perfume of lotus and lilies.....floating in the tanks regaled the sense of smell.'

p. 114

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

poorest of the people to an end. Men began to multiply on all sides. Vasishta's instructions improved their mind. Viswamitra's skilful statesmanship and his neatly composed statutes brought all quarrels and disputes to an end. Valmiki's happiness knew no bounds and his Vina knew no respite. He would rove all over the earth, and bands of citizens would follow the sound whenever they heard the distant murmurs of the notes of his Vina. The tone and import of his song gradually grew deeper and more and more impressive. The burthen was everywhere the same,—"*Brother, brother, we all are brothers!*"

Valmiki's mind, however, had not yet become quite cloudless. True it was peace and unity had been established, but he had grave doubts if genuine brotherly feelings had grown among men.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

3

THE SONGS OF THE RAMAYANA.

THUS in comfort and happiness time wore off. Year after year, ten thousand years thus passed away. The time for Rama's return to Paradise approached. After the exile of his brother Lakshmana[a] grief and remorse made him resolve to pass away by throwing himself into the river Saraju. With this object he called a vast gathering on the left bank of the Saraju. Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Sudras, Nishadas, Chandalas, Rakshashas and Vanaras filled the meeting place. Vasishta and Viswamitra requested Valmiki to give publicity to his Ramayana this day. Valmiki thereupon began to sing to the tender strains of his Vina in company with his

(a) The younger brother and companion of Rama during his wanderings and adventures. He so attached himself to Rama as to be called his second self. Fear of Rishi Durvasha's curse caused him to take Durvasha to the audience-chamber, against Rama's express orders, when Rama was conversing with Kala the Lord of death. The latter had extorted a promise from Rama to banish any one who entered during their interview, and Lakshmana was in consequence exiled.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

well-trained pupils Laba and Kusha.[b]

Valmiki played on his Vina, Kusha and Laba sang, and the vast audience began to lose all control over their senses. They wept as the song grew plaintive and laughed as it grew merry, and felt happy as it passed into an air of gladness. As his doings in the olden times revived in his memory, Rama too became elated with joy or sad almost to tears. Old feelings revived in him would often enshroud him with grief and distraction. Vasishta and Viswamitra gazed in astonishment at this marvellous exhibition of Valmiki's wonderful artistic skill.

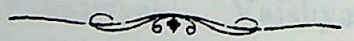
All on a sudden about this time the Milky Way parted in two and flowers fell in showers over the head of Valmiki. All looked up and saw the Ribhus coming down singing the songs of the Ramayana along with Kusha and Laba in the self-same tune and strain. As they approached nearer their voices grew sweeter and sweeter, and the vast gathering went wild with emotion on hearing the Ribhus sing. Vasishta and

(*a*) The twin sons of Rama who were born when his spouse Sita was in exile and were then unknown to Rama. They were the two rhapsodists who first committed the Ramayana to memory and recited it at assemblies.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Viswamitra had once hoped to join their voices with those of the Ribhus in song some day. The songs of the Ramayana now welled out of their throats to-day from the ecstasy of joy in their hearts. Enraptured with love, Ribhus, Rishis and common mortals, all sang together with their hands upraised. Rama too lost all sense and reason and joined in the song and dance. Had not Brahma arrived about this time, there would perhaps have been no end to this entrancing dance.



4

THE ASCENSION.

ON his arrival Brahma too felt an eager impulse to plunge into the ecstatic dance. What wonder that he should be swayed by the same feelings that moved the Creator of all that breathed incarnate in the human shape. But he restrained himself with an effort and reminded Rama

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

about Vaikuntha, his abode in Paradise. Rama took leave of his people and relinquished his earthly frame by throwing himself into the Saraju. His brothers also released themselves from their earthly mould and withdrew into the Infinity of the supreme All-pervading Spirit.

The oldest among the people accompanied them and increased the number of the Ribhus, who welcomed the new-comers with tender embraces and in the full rapture of their loving hearts began to sing the same song that had once electrified the minds of the three Rishis.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

5

THE SEVEN RISHIS.

BRAHMA asked Vasishta to throw away his earthly body and take a place in the constellation of the *Seven Rishis.*[a] Vasishta accordingly cast off his earthly frame into the waters of the Saraju, and clad in celestial radiance began to rise every day in the heavens to circumspect the doings of the world below.

6

VISWAMITRA.

VISWAMITRA too gave up his temporal body and became one of the chief leaders of the Ribhus. Wisdom dawned upon him now as he realized that earthly empire is a delusion and the elevation of the heart is the only reality.

(*a*) The constellation *Ursa Major*, the seven stars of which are supposed to be the seven great Rishis, Marichi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishta.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

7

HEAVEN DECLINED.

WHEN Brahma asked Valmiki to ascend to heaven, his eyes bathed in tears he threw himself at his feet, and said, "O First among the Gods! I am the greatest of sinners, and the worst among human beings. I am unable to obey thy wish. There has not yet been, O Lord, sufficient expiation of all the sins I have been guilty of. I am sunk in the mire of sinfulness. What should I do in heaven, O Merciful One! After all the harm I have done to man, how can there be any atonement for my sins, O Lord of the afflicted, until I can make all men equally happy. Men are still full of self-conceit, O Lord! They still cling to the vanity of being Brahman and Kshatriya; still do they draw distinction between the wise and the ignorant, the rich and the poor. How are they then happy, O Brahma? When this conceit disappears among men, the whole earth will go to heaven. I shall then obey thy command, O Merciful One! Pardon me for the present, my kind Lord!—"

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Valmiki wept and Brahma was much affected at it. Flowers, however, dropped from the hands of the Ribhus, continued falling upon Valmiki's head.

8

THE UNIVERSE-BODY.

BRAHMA said: "Cast thine eyes towards the firmament."

Valmiki looked and saw,— in the centre of numberless suns, seated on a lotus-bed and decked with armlets and golden ear-rings, wearing a necklace and with a diadem on His brow, holding the sacred conch and the discus and His body shining as pure gold, the enemy of Mura[a] was there manifest in all His glory! Filled with love and veneration, Valmiki gazed on the vision. Even as he looked, Narayana assumed the Universe-Body of immense proportions. Valmiki saw the Figure of limitless forms—

(a) A ferocious *Asura* or demon killed by Krishna, who was an incarnation of Narayana. *Murari*, or 'enemy of Mura' is an epithet of Vishnu.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

myriads of arms, myriads of bellies, and myriads of faces with innumerable eyes and formidable rows of upstanding teeth! There was no beginning nor end nor middle. The sun and the moon were His eyes. Blazing fire was in His mouth, the effulgence of His body brightened all quarters to the end of the horizon. Thus did Narayana fill up the whole of the space between earth and heaven. Devas and Danavas, Yakshas and Rakshas,[a] Brahma and all the rest of the Gods, all human beings and all animals that breathed,—all without exception were seen entering the mouth of the Measureless Figure. Millions and millions of worlds lay at the root of each of His hairs. Valmiki perceived that before the Presence, man was but nothing and even Gods were the merest worms. Valmiki saw and began to invoke him —

"Before and behind Thee in obeisance I bend,
From all quarters, O All! to Thee I bow;
Infinite Thy energy, measureless Thy might,
All-embracing, thus All in all art Thou!"

"Behold, Valmiki," said Brahma, "all men are equal, all are brothers, all are

(a) Gods and other mythical beings.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

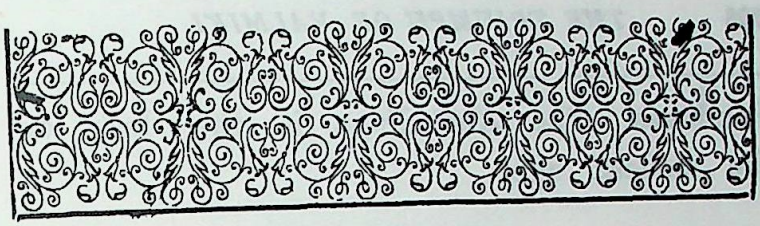
one. Go round the earth, proclaim this equality, brotherhood and oneness in thy songs. Thou hast become immortal. Thine is the victory !"

Forth from the mouth of the Measureless Being echoed a voice of deep and intense volume —" *VICTORY !*"

THE END

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



APPENDIX.

I

THE *SATYA* AND THE *TRETA YUGAS.*

THESE are the first and the second cycles out of four such which are to be ultimately followed by a universal cataclysm,— the other two being *Dwápara* and *Kali*. The *Satya Yuga* corresponds to the Golden Age when men are all devoted to truth and religion and live a life of virtue and piety. Since then, virtue deteriorates gradually through the other three ages aud vice prospers, till in the *Kali Yuga* vice preponderates greatly and brings about the destruction of the world. During the *Treta* or the Second age, Rama, the hero of the great Epic *Ramayana*, and other kings of the Solar race flourished. The *Dwápara* was the Third age when occurred the great *Kurukshetra* war, the subject-matter of the other great Epic *Mahabharata*, between the Kauravas and the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Pandavas. The *Kali Yuga* is the last or the modern age.

II

THE *VIRATA* FORM.

NARAYANA is one of the designations of Vishnu, the Lord of the universe. On the eve of the battle of Kurukshetra, Arjuna, the third of the five Pandava brothers and the greatest warrior among them, finding all the nearest and dearest friends and relatives ranged on either side, lost heart and expressed reluctance to fight or to have a hand in killing them. It was therefore pointed out to him that the whole universe lay merged in the body of Narayana and death or life made but little difference, and that it was really He who killed or generated, and men were merely the means. The *Virata-Murti* or the Universe-Body of Narayana was then shewn to him, for a description of which see Part VIII. 8.

For fuller details, see *Srimadvagabadgeeta.*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

VALMIKI
AND HIS TIMES

₹ 1895

ISBN 978-27-6031-979-8

9 782760 319798

AUTHORS
PUBLISHING HOUSE
D-245, Anand Vihar,
Delhi- 110092 (India)

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE